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The Frontier Angel.

A Romance of Kentucky Rangers' Life.

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AUTHOR OF "SETH JONES," "BILL BIDDON," "NAT
TODD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE DEPARTURE.

In the western part of Pennsylvania, near the commencement of the Ohio River, stands a small town, which at the close of the last century, numbered about thirty dwellings. Although properly a border settlement at the time mentioned, there were so many others beyond, that it was hardly regarded as being in the "Mighty West." The inhabitants were mostly farmers, possessed of large and beautiful farms, who commenced their labors in the morning, and retired to rest in the evening, without much fear of the molestation of their savage brethren. True, a few years previous, the latter had committed murders and depredations even further east than this, and the settlers never allowed themselves fully to give way to an undue sense of security. But, unless a most unexpected triumph should crown the struggles of the Indians, there was little occasion for apprehension on the part of the whites.

The time on which we visit this village, is an even-

ing in the spring, toward the close of the last century. The night is dark and cloudy, and the houses are invisible in the deep gloom; but there are numerous twinkling lights in the different dwellings, which give it the appearance of a constellation set in the vast sky of darkness around. Broad fields of cleared land stretch for a long distance into the background, while there are numerous other dwellings further eastward, toward Pittsburg, and many cabins further westward in Ohio and Virginia; so that they are not without neighbors, and may properly be said still to be in the land of civilization.

Near the western end of the village, stood a large frame house, in the lower story of which a bright light was burning. Within, seated around a large fire, were four individuals, engaged in conversation. The first was a pleasant, middle-aged man, rather portly and good-natured; the second was his wife, a few years younger, with an equally pleasant face, and a cheerful, musical voice. Upon the opposite side of the fire sat a young man, of a hardy, muscular frame, and a rather handsome appearance. Beside him was a maiden of eighteen or twenty years, who, without exaggeration, might be pronounced beautiful.

The first couple, as said, were man and wife. The second two intended to be at some future time—they were lovers.

The name of the parents was Abbot, and the maiden was Marian Abbot, their daughter. They were farmers, who, not having succeeded as well as they anticipated, had come to the determination to emigrate further west—in fact, into the very heart of Kentucky. A flat-boat was to start the next morning down the river, in which a number of their

neighbors were going, and in which they intended to send Marian; but the parents themselves were compelled to wait several months in order to bring their affairs to a settlement. Their resolution had been taken rather suddenly, but, as said, they were compelled to wait before fulfilling it.

The flat-boat which was to start on the morrow, carried with it more men than Abbot expected would accompany him, and hence he deemed it much safer for Marian that she should go with it, and in their western home, wait for his coming.

The young man to whom we have referred, was Russel Mansfield, the only son of his parents, as was Marian the only daughter of hers. An attachment had existed between them for a year or two, and it was generally expected by the parents of both, that, as soon as they were in a proper condition, they would be united for life. The parents of Mansfield united with Abbot in their resolution, and it was their intention to depart at the same time with him. The same causes that led to his detention, produced theirs; and, as it was their wish that Russel should remain with and accompany them, he had consented. The young man disliked very much the idea of a separation, even for so short a period as a few months, from his beloved; but reflection and sober sense told him it was best that it should be so. Nearly a dozen well-armed and courageous men would protect her, while, should her going be deferred until his, there would hardly be half that number. Thus it was that the present turn of affairs came about.

"If we have a storm at the beginning of our journey, will it not be a bad omen, father?" asked Marian, with a smile.



"KEEP OFF! KEEP OFF! YOU WILL ALL BE KILLED!" SHE CRIED, IN A BEREAVING VOICE.—Page 3.

"Tut, dear, don't speak of such things. I would that your mother had such a body-guard when she follows you."

"Oh, well, I meant nothing. I have no apprehension."

"There is danger, it is true," remarked Mansfield; "but it only threatens weakness and inexperience. Your party are strong, and they have had enough experience, to avoid all stratagems and decoys of their enemy."

"Yes darling, don't let such thoughts trouble you. There is One who is able to protect the weakest in the hour of the greatest peril. Dangers will beset you on every hand, but there will be strong and friendly hearts around you, and a strong and friendly Heart overhead," added the mother.

"But one thing seriously troubles me," remarked Abbot, gravely, "and that is the thought of that McGable. He has now been absent a year, and you remember, he threatened vengeance against you, Marian, when he left."

"Why, father, how can he injure me?" asked Marian in surprise; "who knows where he has gone?"

"I have been told that he was in the West," answered Abbot, quietly.

"Well, and what of that? I am sure there is nothing in that need frighten us."

"I have heard a darker story of him," added the father, in a lower tone, and glancing around, as if he feared other ears might hear him.

"What was it?" asked Marian, breathlessly.

"I have been told by those whose word could not be doubted, that he has turned renegade, and that his atrocities equal those of Girty, McGee, Proctor, and the other fiends."

"Where does he generally commit his outrages?" asked Mansfield.

"I do not wish to alarm you, Marian, and I think there is no reason for your being alarmed; but, as all the others who accompany you know the same thing, there can be no harm in warning you. At first, when he joined the British and Indians, he united with the parties who attacked the defenseless settlements and travelers; but he is cowardly, and there is too much danger in that. He is now a decoy along the Ohio river, and uses all the means in his power to entice the passing flat-boats to shore. The devil himself seems to aid his invention, for he contrives such ingenious schemes that it is said he has outwitted some of the old backwoodsmen and hunters themselves."

"What does he do with his prisoners?"

"He has never been known to give quarter to any one. All are consigned to the tomahawk or the stake, and the women perhaps to a still more dreadful fate."

"What induced him to turn traitor?"

"His own devilish disposition, I suppose. He has more than once given out that you will suffer, daughter, for your rejection of him; and next to you his especial enmity seems to be against Mansfield, here."

"I only ask Heaven that we two may meet on equal ground. He would never shame the race to which he belongs, again," exclaimed our hero, indignantly.

"Perhaps you may, Russel—perhaps you may. Ah! is that thunder?"

All listened for a moment, and heard the distant booming of thunder, and the sighing of the wind through the trees that stood near the house. A storm was, indeed, gathering. Dark clouds were wheeling through the sky, and, as Mrs. Abbot looked out, she could discern by the aid of the fire blazing on the broad hearth, the tops of the trees swaying, and hear the night-wind howling through and around the village.

"There is a storm gathering, but I am in hopes that it will pass off before morning," she remarked, as she resumed her knitting and sat in the family rocking-chair.

"I guess it will not last long," added Mansfield.

Silence now reigned for a time in the house. Abbot sat in the corner, slowly smoking his pipe, and gazing meditatively in the fire, watching the glowing embers as they fell apart, and conjuring up pictures and images in the coals. The mother continued knitting, her chair gently rocking, and giving out the same pleasant squeak that it had done for years. Now and then she raised her eyes a moment to glance at her husband or daughter, and then let them fall again to the work before her. A kitten was tumbling over the floor, playing antics with her ball of yarn, or whirling around in a circle in an attempt to grasp the end of its tail. Falling in this, it stood a moment, as if in meditation, and then, with a plunge, it lit upon the back of a big Maltese, quietly slumbering at the feet of Marian, and fixed its claws in his head, eyes, or any place that offered. The old fellow bore it unflinchingly for a moment, until becoming unendurable, he grasped the mischievous creature by the head, and holding it thus a moment gave it a spat, and then quietly resumed his half-sitting posture and shut his eyes again.

Upon the other side of the fire was stretched Hero, the house-dog. He was of the hound species, and a noble fellow. As he lay, his long nose dropped upon the hearth, between his two paws, and turned toward the fire, probably he suspected mischief, for now and then he slowly raised the corner of one eyelid, and glanced at the kitten, and then with a twitch and start, slightly shifted his position. Once or twice he flapped his long ears, as if to give warning that he was not yet asleep, and it would be dangerous to trifle with him.

But the demon of mischief seemed to possess the young kitten. It walked straight up to him,

laid its paw on his cold nose, and then scratched terribly. The dog, in turn, raised one of his huge paws, and gave it a cuff that rolled it to the middle of the floor again. The kitten rose demurely, and had recourse to the ball of yarn once more. Hero seeing this, dropped his head with a threatening look, and again slept.

The old clock ticked loudly upon the mantel; the wind roared down the chimney, and moaned around the house. Soon several drops of rain rattled against the window, a terrific crash of thunder burst overhead, and the storm came in all its fury.

It lasted but a short time, when a lull occurred. Just at this moment the clock struck the hour of nine. Abbot knocked the ashes from his pipe, took down the old, wooden-covered Bible, and commenced reading a chapter. The mother laid aside her knitting, folded her hands upon her lap, and Mansfield and Marian paid a respectful attention.

The chapter finished, all sunk devoutly upon their knees, and the earnest monotone of Abbot ascended to the Protector of all. The desolate moaning of the tempest added solemnity to the scene, and gave a beautiful appropriateness to the petition that was offered.

As the parents rose, they bade Russel good-night and retired. Left alone with Marian, he glided to her side, took her hand within his own and pulled her head over upon his bosom.

"What are you thinking of, Marian?"

"I was wondering at what father said."

"Are you alarmed?"

"I feel some apprehension, I confess. You know what a wicked man he is, and what terrible passions he has. I know more of him than you do, Russel."

"I suppose you do," he replied, in a tone of slight reproach.

"What do you mean by that?" she asked, looking up in his face with a reproachful expression in her mild blue eyes.

"Oh, nothing!" he laughed, kissing her glowing cheek.

"I mean I know more of him, Russel, because he has plagued me more with his presence than he has you. I dreaded him as I did a serpent, and when I at last told him I never wished to see him again, he left me with a curse. Oh, Russel! it was not me alone that he cursed, but you! He swore that he would kill you, for he knew you were the cause of it, and he said I should suffer, too."

"You are not alarmed for me, Marian?"

"Yes, for I shall fear his power as long as he lives. I almost wish that father would remain here, but there is no persuading him, and I shall not falter at the last moment."

"I can not share your apprehension. You are going to a settlement which is well guarded, and whose inhabitants are experienced in Indian warfare. I can see no reason for fear."

"I trust there is not, but if I ever get there I shall look anxiously for my parents' and your arrival."

The two conversed longer upon the departure tomorrow, and discussed their plans for the future, until, when the storm had ceased, our hero took his departure.

As perhaps the reader has surmised, the person referred to by the parents and the lovers, had once sought the hand of Marian. He had made his appearance in the village a year or two previous, and gave his name as Tom McGable. Further than this, nothing was known. He professed to belong to the Eastern States and had no relations or acquaintances in the village. He was a thin, nervous, sharp-featured man, with long Indian hair, dark, restless eyes, and a forbidding cast of countenance. He was a person of terrible passions, and was dreaded by all who knew him. Marian turned from his advances with loathing, but he pertinaciously persisted until he was driven from her house. He left, vowing revenge; and rumor shortly after reached the village that he had gone further west and united with the Indians against the whites. There was good reason for this report, as all knew that he was a man who would stop at nothing that might gratify his vindictive feelings.

CHAPTER II.

THE FATE OF THE FLAT-BOAT.

As was predicted, the storm soon cleared away, and the morning dawned bright and beautiful. Birds were singing and flitting from limb to limb, the water sparkled upon the grass and twigs, and by the time it was fairly light, the whole village was astir.

Down in the water, but safely moored to shore, rested a flat-boat waiting for its living freight, before being loosened from its fastenings. As the commotion in the village increased, numbers commenced wending their way toward the river, and in a short time nearly all stood upon the shore. The majority carried furniture and utensils with them, which, by passing over several planks, were deposited upon the boat.

The farewells were now given. There were ten men, seven of whom had wives, besides Marian, so that the entire number was eighteen. With the exception of the latter, these had embarked all of their wealth and possessions upon this perilous undertaking.

Marian embraced her parents, received their last advice, and, as she passed over the plank, encountered Mansfield.

"Good-by," she said, gayly; "I shall soon expect you."

He took her hand, and, holding it a moment, said:

"I trust we shall be separated but a short time, dear Marian. I have lain awake all night thinking of this, and I believe there is danger—danger not only upon the river, but after you have reached your

destination. You know to whom I refer—and oh! let me beseech you to be careful of exposing yourself. God bless you! Good-by, and may we soon meet again."

He wrung her hand as she passed over the boat; the plank was drawn on board, the fastenings loosened, and the flat-boat commenced slowly moving with the current.

"Good-luck to you!" called out Abbot. "Look out for danger, have your eyes open for decoys, and don't, under any pretense, be induced to leave the center of the stream."

The flat-boat slowly swept out into the stream, and, after a time gaining the center of the current, moved forward with greater rapidity. Numbers yet stood upon the shore, waving their farewells; but the boat soon rounded a bend, and they all disappeared from view.

Those on board now withdrew their eyes from the shore, and made preparations for the perilous journey before them. The flat-boat was a large, unwieldy affair, built like all similar ones, so as to float with the current alone. The sides were bullet-proof, and the shape of the thing was similar to a box. About three-fourths of the length were taken up as a cabin, which communicated with the other part by means of a small door. A long, sweeping oar was hung at each end, and balanced so as to dip into the water. There was a small space at either end of the boat which could be reached by passing through the cabin. The latter was divided into two compartments, and, as regarded comfort and convenience, probably the flat-boat could have been little improved.

The occasion and season of the year were such that none could help feeling buoyant and hopeful. The sun was now up in the heavens, shedding its warm and cheering rays upon forest and river. The rain-drops hung like pendent jewels and the river glistened like molten gold. A thin mist was rising along the shore as the sun's warmth grew greater. Now and then a woodman's cabin was passed, and it could be seen nestling in the small clearing, and apparently as comfortable as though no enemy had ever threatened it. Perhaps the settler himself came forth with his wife to wonder and view the passing boat, and exchange salutations with the first white persons they had seen for months. Toward noon they detected a solitary form standing below them, upon a bend in the river. A nearer approach showed him to be a hunter. He waved his coon-skin cap over his head as they came abreast, gave a cheering hurrah and called out:

"Keep a powerful look-out for reds, y u, fur they're thick as flies in August down toward the Big Sandy and Scioto. Wal they is, strangers; and if you gits through without gittin' a taste of thar compliments, why here's as will stand treat all round."

After giving this warning, the hunter watched them a few minutes longer, and then turned and disappeared in the forest.

Some miles further down they passed a small settlement which had been commenced but a few months before. A block-house, however, was erected and stood at one end, as if to ward off all approach. It was a clumsy, awkward building, but abundantly able to answer every purpose for which it was intended. It was two stories in height, the upper one so much smaller than the lower one that it had the appearance of standing upon a platform. The outer edge of this projection was protected by palisades, inclosing it, except at one point where the gaping mouth of a swivel gave warning of the resistance it was capable of giving. The instrument was of brass, and so brightly burnished that it could be seen gleaming in the sunlight by those upon the flat-boat. A sentinel was pacing slowly around the block-house, a long rifle resting upon his shoulder, and his keen eye sweeping the horizon at a glance. As he caught sight of the flat-boat, he raised his cap and saluted it; and shortly after several others appeared beside him and did the same. Our friends returned the salutation, and continued watching the tiny settlement until the intervening forest hid it from view.

This block-house was constructed somewhat differently from those generally upon the frontiers, although now and then a similar one is found even at this day.

The settlements and solitary cabins were still passed at long intervals, and the night proved so dark and cheerless, that they put in to shore near a small cluster of houses and spent the night. As they were hardly yet in dangerous territory, they committed no indiscretion in doing this.

At sunrise the boat was loosened, and our friends were once more floating forward, a day's journey nearer their destination. Nothing worth noting occurred during this day. The settlements became more rare, and the faces of their kindred scarcer. Late in the afternoon they passed the mouth of the Muskingum, and at night a small river which put in from the Virginia side. There was a slight moon this night. A vigilant watch, of course, was maintained.

In the morning they were opposite the point where the Great Kanawha debouches into the Ohio. The settlement here was termed Point Pleasant, by which name it is known at the present day. It was at this point that they were joined by a man who stated that he was a ranger going to Massie's Station down the Ohio. Without the least mistrust or suspicion our friends took him on board, and continued floating hopefully down the beautiful river.

This day, when at the mouth of the Big Sandy, and just at the elbow of the great bend in the Ohio, an attempt was made to decoy them ashore. The stranger whom they had taken on board, instantly warned them of their danger, and told them that

they must pay no attention to the entreaties of the white men. The emigrants, as the case stood, would not have deviated from their course, but the earnestness of their new-found friend made them esteem him highly and congratulate themselves upon having secured such an ally.

All, we say, thought thus; but there were two exceptions—Marian and a tall, bony, unmarried man by the name of Peterson. This fellow looked upon their new acquaintance with distrust the minute he stepped upon the boat.

"I'll be darned, Marian," he said, in an undertone, after they had passed the decoy, "ef I don't s'picion that chap. He's mighty clever, and the trouble is he is a *little too clever*."

"Do you really fear him?" asked Marian, frightened at finding that another shared her suspicions.

"Fear him?—I'd like to see the man I'm afraid of. All I'd ask would be to just git them are paws on old Simon Girty or that McGable that people allow is out in these parts, or that man thar if he ain't what he orter be, which I allow is the case."

"At any rate, watch him, Jim, for it won't do to have a traitor within when there are so many without."

"I'll watch him, I reckon, Marian; and by the Eternal, the first real genuine sign of treachery I see, I'll shoot him!"

Peterson stood looking upon the object of his remarks with flashing eyes, gesticulating earnestly with his long, bony, muscular arms as though he ached to get him once fairly within his grasp. Peterson would have been a dangerous customer for any man. He was now about thirty years of age, and eight years of his life had been spent as scout and ranger. He had served under St. Clair and Gen. Harmer, and when the former suffered such a disastrous defeat, he became so disgusted with the generalship of his leaders, that he left the country and settled down in the village mentioned at the commencement of this work. Here he had remained until the present time; but the daring, wandering, reckless spirit was so strong within him that he could resist no longer, and he joined the present party with the full determination of taking to the woods again as soon as they arrived at their destination. He was over six feet in height, of a thin, attenuated frame, capable of panther-like strength and activity, with a keen, restless gray eye, and a sharp-featured visage.

Marian, after the conversation, descended to the cabin, but her mind was in such a tumult of fear and apprehension that she could not restrain her agitation. She now firmly believed that the stranger above was an enemy, and that, even with the shrewdness of Jim Peterson to protect them, they were all still in the utmost peril. But she knew of no course to pursue. Should she impart her suspicions to the females, they would either ridicule her or become so terrified that the case would be infinitely worse. She concluded, at last, that the case must be left to Peterson.

In a short time night commenced settling over the woods and river. The emigrants had now made such progress upon their way, that they were about halfway between the Big Sandy and Scioto. The dense forests shut down upon either hand, and not a sign of civilization met the eye.

Before it was fairly dark, the flat-boat was suddenly hailed from the shore. A white man, limping and apparently in great distress, besought them to run in and take him on board.

"He's a decoy," remarked the stranger, who had intently watched him from the first.

"How do you know he is, colonel?" asked Peterson, who had intently watched the stranger all the time.

"How do I know he is?" replied the latter. "I reckon as how any fool could tell the same mighty quick."

"You're sure of it then, eh?"

"In course I am."

The ranger turned on his heel, satisfied that he was a traitor. This may seem strange to the reader, but it would not be to a backwoodsman who understood the case. The eagerness and quickness this man had evinced to point out danger, ever since he joined our friends, was good reason for suspicion. Had he been a genuine ranger, he would have hesitated before giving his opinion, and not defeat his own ends by showing too much knowledge of what was unknown to the rest.

Peterson walked away from him, and communicated his suspicions to several of his friends. Just as he expected, they laughed at him, and accused him almost of meanness. Stung by this rebuke, the ranger became silent and left them.

Meanwhile, the man upon the shore was calling louder than ever. Not content with being refused, he was limping along shore, and beseeching them in more piteous tones than ever. The whites resolutely turned their ears against him, and would not have noticed him at all, had not the stranger spoken.

"I declare, it looks quite queer, anyhow. I never knowed one of them decoys to hang on like that."

"You have no notion that he is any thing else but one, or that he has any object except our own destruction?"

"I didn't think different at first, but it begins to look doubtful. Just let me say a few words to him."

With this he stepped to one side of the boat, and called out, "What's your name?"

"John Haggart."

"How came you to get in such an ugly fix?"

"I was out scouting it, and was cotched by the Shawnees, and have just got away from them. For God's sake, come and take me off, for they're after me."

"Jump in the water and swim out to us."

"My hurt is too bad; I've got a bullet clean through my thigh, and can just drag the leg after the other. Yonder is the smoke of their wigwams up on the hill, and they ain't fur off. My God! don't leave a white man thus!"

Our friends looked in the direction he indicated, and could faintly discern in the gathering gloom a thin wreath of smoke rising from the trees. The suffering man, as if aware of their thoughts, called out:

"That is whar they are and their runners are out after me. May God forever curse you, if you ever leave me here."

"What do yer think?" asked the stranger, turning round with an air of perplexity to the others. "I believe that man ain't a decoy, not at all; and ef he isn't, we orter not leave him there to be cooked by the red devils. Still I shouldn't say nothing, but leave it with you."

"It will never do to run the boat ashore," said several of the men, firmly.

"Oh, I didn't mean that. In course, it would be foolish to do that. But I've been thinking," and the man dropped his eyes, as if in great perplexity, "that we orter help that man off. To do such a thing we ain't compelled to expose ourselves to danger. What is your views, friends?"

"Why, if the thing can be done without imperiling ourselves, it is our Christian duty to do it; but we are at a loss at present to understand how we could manage it."

"Oh, easily enough; just run the boat in about half-way, where the water is so shallow that the fellow can wade out to us. Keep your eyes open, and if there's the least sign of treachery, we can fall into the current again and float off."

"A good plan, and I see no reason for not adopting it."

All echoed this sentiment, with the exception of Peterson, who still stood apart, leaning against the side of the boat, with his head dropped upon his breast.

"Come, Jim, what do you think of it?" asked one of the emigrants, and the others all turned toward him for a reply.

"I think in the first place, you are all a set of fools, not to see you've got a sneaking decoy right among ye, who's doing his purtiest to git you in to shore to please that other trap."

"Outrageous! shameful!" exclaimed several, horrified at the blunt, plain-spoken answer they had received.

"Go on, and do what you please, but don't ax me no more, for I've got nothing at all to say," added Peterson, who was touched to the quick by what he had heard in reply.

The stranger, it was observed, said nothing at all, except after a few minutes, to urge the matter upon our friends. It was now quite dark, but the form of the man on shore could be seen struggling along, and calling out in tones that were really heart-rending. The men consulted a while longer, and then determined to follow the suggestion of their friend.

The long guiding-oars were dipped into the water, and with a loud splash swung a few feet, when the unwieldy flat-boat began slowly sidling in toward shore. It moved very tardily, however, and it was noticed that its progress down-stream was continually growing less and less. This was accounted for by the fact that they were getting out of the current, and moving in shallow water.

They had hardly commenced rowing, when Marian asked Peterson whether there was not another person upon the bank.

"It is a female, and see how motionless she stands! She is just below that man."

"Yes, I see her—she is waving her hands. Hark!"

"Keep off! keep off! You will all be killed!" called out the person alluded to, in a beseeching voice.

"Who is she?" asked Marian, growing more excited.

"She's the Frontier Angel. Haven't you heard of her? When she warns a white, he can depend on it she means what she says. This ain't the first time she has done this thing."

"Oh, Jin!" implored Marian, "this is awful; tell them before it is too late. They can but heed you."

The ranger hesitated a moment, as he remembered the cutting rebuff he had received; but the imploring voice of Marian, together with his own sense of duty, conquered. He turned his head and looked at the oarsmen. They had paused as the warning voice reached them.

"What does that mean?" asked one.

"That gal is the Frontier Angel that you've heard the boys talk about at the settlement. Ef any of you wants red night-caps, don't mind her; ef you doesn't, jest get back into the channel as soon as them oars will take you."

"I've heard that that gal you call the Frontier Angel is nobody but a crazy squaw," said one of the oarsmen, still hesitating.

"Go on, then," said Peterson, stung to the quick by this second repulse. "I sha'n't say no more," he added, in a lower tone, to Marian.

"Didn't you know that gal is a crazy fool?" said the stranger, sneeringly. "Of course she is, and I thought you knowed it. Ef you're going to help that dyin' feller, you've got to be quick about it, 'cause the reds can't be far off."

Thus appealed to, the oarsmen commenced, although it cannot be said all were free from misgiving. But in the face of the suspicious actions of the man upon shore, and the continued warnings of the Frontier Angel, the flat-boat gradually approached its doom. Several of the men already half-repenting their rashness, and stood with their eyes fixed upon the shore, and an expression of painful doubt upon their features.

Peterson saw all these manifestations, and thus communed with himself;

"No use of talkin', they're all goin' sure, and, Jim Peterson, the question is what you propose to do. You can 'tend to yourself well enough, but how 'bout Marian? It won't do to leave her. You hain't forgotten, Jim, the time them same reds butchered your gal. No, Jim, you never forgot that, and you *nev'r will*; and how do you s'pose Mansfield will feel ef you leave his gal in the same fix? 'I won't do, 'twon't do, Jim. Can you swim; Marian?' he asked, turning toward her.

"Yes; why do you ask?"

"It's what has got to be done, Marian. You see we'll be in shore in a few minutes. Stick by me, and I'll take you overboard."

"Why not now, Jim?"

"You see it's getting dark fast, and every minute will help us. By the Eternal! do you know that feller on shore? It is McGable! Hello! the boat has struck!"

Such was the case, and what was more alarming, they were but a few rods from shore. It was noticed, too, that the wailing tone of the decoy had changed to a more commanding one, while the Frontier Angel had disappeared.

"What does this mean, sir?" asked one of the oarsmen, thoroughly alarmed.

"You are my prisoner, sir!" replied the stranger. "Don't get excited—it's no use. That man is McGable and the Shawnees are waitin' fur yer ha'r. Ef you undertake to fight, you'll be tomahawked in a minute, but ef you give in nice like, p'raps some of yer'll be let alone. Ef you've no objections, I'll give the signal fur 'em to come aboard."

All except Peterson were paralyzed with horror and seemed utterly speechless. He stepped deliberately forward and said:

"I'd like to ax a question afore you does the thing. What yer going to do with me?"

"Burn and toast you as soon as we get ashore."

"I rather reckon not, old hoss. How does th suit?"

Before even his victim divined his intention, the ranger brought his rifle to his shoulder and fixed his ball passing clean through the breast of the villain. The latter gave a spasmodic start and gasp, and fell forward.

"Hyer's as opines as how it won't be you that'll toast Jim Peterson just yit," remarked the ranger, coolly fastening his rifle to his back.

"Oh, God! what shall we do?" frantically wailed the settlers.

"Fight! you was so anxious to see McGable, you'll have the chance now. Ef yer'd minded what me and the Frontier Angel said, you wouldn't got into this fix. It won't do no good to touch the oars. Yer fast in the mud, and have got to fight!"

Instantly the shore became alive with savages. Yells that curdled the blood rent the air, and the whole mass of swarming bodies plunged into the shallow water, and made for the flat-boat. The whites discharged their shots, but the numbers of their enemies were irresistible. Onward they poured, shouting like madmen, and, clambering up the sides, a scene of butchery took place that sickens the heart to contemplate.

Peterson saw the critical moment had arrived, and catching Marian by the waist, he sprang upon the gunwale, intending to leap over. But that instant a volley was poured into the boat, and a bullet struck her. The ranger felt her becoming a dead weight, at the same moment that a stream of hot blood poured over his hand. He bent his head down, and peered into her face. The dark-blue eyes were slowly shutting, and her head dropped heavily.

"I am dying, Jim," she murmured. "God bless you for your effort. Give my last love to Russel, mother, and father—good-by!"

"Heaven bless you!" said the ranger, laying her gently upon the deck, in spite of the wild scene that had commenced. "You've escaped that McGable, anyhow."

Springing to the gunwale, with an almost superhuman leap Peterson bounded outward into the darkness and disappeared.

CHAPTER III.

THE TWO SCOUTS.

One day in spring, a border ranger was making his way through the cane-brakes of Kentucky, in what is now called Lewis county.

For a period of nearly half a century, the valleys of the Ohio, Scioto, Miami, Mad, and numerous other rivers, were constantly scoured by these rangers, who generally went alone, but sometimes in couples, and very rarely in larger companies. The warlike, revengeful Shawnees, a mighty and powerful nation in themselves, had so stirred up the other tribes, that nothing but eternal watchfulness could guard the settlers from the knife and tomahawk. Many long years was the government compelled to keep an independent force to protect the frontier. The disastrous results of many of these campaigns but prolonged the war; and the final success of our arms is much more due to the prowess of these border rangers than we are apt to imagine.

The scout referred to was proceeding with caution, more from habit than from any suspicion of danger. Were there savages in the vicinity, not the slightest noise would have betrayed his presence to the most watchful.

A moment after, the bushes parted, and the ranger, in a half-crouching position, emerged into the open wood. Here he straightened himself up, and disclosed a frame wondrously like that of Peterson. Tall, sinewy, graceful and thin, almost to emaciation, with a sharp-featured face, half covered by

thin, straggling beard, and eyes of such glittering blackness that they fairly scintillated fire in excitement.

He stood a moment, as if listening, and then strode rapidly forward, trailing a long nitid rifle as he did so. Reaching the edge of the river, he suddenly halted and darted behind a tree. His quick eye had discovered "sign." From this point he peered cautiously out, and then instantly jerked his head back again. This movement was repeated several times, until at last he held his head in a stationary position, muttering:

"Yes, it's a flat-boat aground, sure as my name's Dick Dingle. Things look s'pishus the way it's sticking in the mud thar. Some of the Shawnees' work, I'll swar; and I'll bet my head that Tom McGable's been at the bottom of the whole. Ef I could only meet that dog in a fair stand-up fight, I wouldn't ax no other boon. I'd go home, fold my arms, and with a smile upon my brow, lay down and softly go under. Jest keep docile now, Dick Dingle, and look around afore you gets nigher that concern out thar."

For over two hours Dingle reconnoitered the flat-boat, and all the time kept himself carefully concealed from it. He glided around in the wood, viewing it from every imaginable position that could be reached from the shore. At last he seemed satisfied.

"Whosomever is in that flat-boat ain't *livin'*, that's sartin; and whosomever is watchin' it from shore ain't nigh enough to hurt you, Dingle, so hyer goes."

With this, he stepped softly into the water, and waded out toward the flat-boat. After reaching it, he again paused a moment, glancing toward the shore, and then placing his hand upon the gunwale, bounded over into the boat. The sight that met his eye was enough to freeze with horror, for a moment, even him who was used to meeting death in every repulsive shape!

"They've tomahawked 'em all, and pitched 'em overboard. Ef that ain't enough to make a minister or even a scout swear, then my name ain't Dick Dingle. McGable's been hyer, sure, 'cause whar *he's* been nobody lives. Wal, wal, it's bad business. I like scoutin' it when the killin' is all on our side; but t'aint, by a heap. Ef it war we wouldn't need to scout; but McGable is bound to squar' accounts with me yit for this night's business."

The ranger remained a short time longer, examining the flat-boat, which, as the reader has surmised, was the one whose sad fate has been recorded. Satisfied that not a soul had survived the frightful massacre, after a few minutes' further delay, he again dropped into the water, and made his way to land.

"Old Mad Anthony sent me down in these parts to find out what the reds ar' drivin' at, and I reckon as how I've found."

The ranger disappeared like a shadow, for he became aware that some other person besides himself was in the wood. The instant of discovery he dropped upon his hands and knees, and glided swiftly and noiselessly away to reconnoiter the stranger.

Now, it so happened that the latter was in precisely the same situation, and it was a singular coincidence that both should make the discovery of the other's presence, and commence seeking to know him at the same moment.

The stratagems, maneuvers, and artifices resorted to by each to accomplish his ends, were extraordinary. For nearly two hours they dodged and feinted, glided and retreated, without coming any nearer success, and finally made the discovery by accident. Dingle came to the conclusion that whoever might be his rival he certainly was a genuine woodman, and, if an Indian, one who was well worthy of coping with him. But the consummate tact and skul displayed, led him to suspect the other was a white man, and for this reason he became more careless in his movements. The consequence was that, after he had flitted from one tree to another, he heard his name called.

"Shoot me, if that ain't you, Dick Dingle! Why don't you come out and shake paws with an old friend?"

And the next minute, Jim Peterson stepped boldly forth.

"Wal, Jim, I might've knowed that was your ugly pieter. Whar'd you come from?"

The two grasped hands, and gave, what Edward Everett terms, the genuine *tourniquet* shake. They had been brother rangers through General St. Clair's war, and had ever been together, encountering all imaginary dangers, and were the joint heroes of most wonderful escapes. And when we say that neither had seen the face of the other for over six years, it may well be supposed that their meeting was most agreeable. As they stood grasping hands, and smilingly exchanging jocular remarks in their characteristic way, the resemblance between them was remarkable. In fact, they had often, when in service, been taken for brothers, and their identity often confounded. The Shawnees, who knew them rather more than they cared about, termed them the "Double Long-Knives." Both were tall, graceful and sinewy, as straight as arrows, and, to increase the perplexity of separating them, they dressed precisely alike. But Dingle had small black eyes, and a sharp Roman nose, while Peterson had eyes of a light gray color, and a nose of Grecian cast.

"Come, Dick, what are you doin' in these parts?"

"Out fur Mad Anthony, and have been taking a look at the flat-boat there. Ah! bad business! bad business, Jim!"

"Yas, if you'd have only see'd it, Dick, you might say so."

"Do you know any thing 'bout it? Who the poor wretches was?—when t'was done?—how they came to do it?—and *who* done it?" asked Dingle, excitedly.

"I war on that boat, and the only one who saved his hair."

"The only one, Jim?"

"The only one; and when I got clean off, I just clapped my hand on my head to see ef my hair was thar still, fur I had strong doubts of it. I was the only one! I took a long jump and a dive for it."

"Let me ax you one thing," said Dingle, when he had finished. "Do you know whether McGable had any thing to do with this business?"

"He was the decoy himself; but a feller come on board up at the Kanawha who got the poor fools to run in to shore."

"Was he a short, squashy-looking imp?"

"He war exactly so."

"Then 'twas Pete Gammock. I know him. He and McGable have hung togetaer fur three—four years that way. That's his plan; he's tried the same trick afore. He goes on the flat-boats at some place up that way, and purtends he's one of us going down the river to the "Three Islands," Maysville, or some of the forts. After he gets on, he fixes so as to pull the wool over thar eyes, and when McGable bawls out fur 'em to come ashore, he persuades 'em to do it."

"He'll never do it again, fur I settled the business with him soon as he owned up he'd come the gammon game. I feel sorry, Dick, mighty sorry fur them poor whites that was served that mean trick; but thar was one among 'em that went under, and I ain't ashamed to own it makes me feel watery to think on it. I left her dyin' on board just as I jumped over and the imps clambered up."

Peterson drew the sleeve of his hunting-shirt across his eyes, and Dingle, with respect to his feelings, remained silent a moment, when he returned: "P'raps she ain't gone under, Jim; may be the reds have gone off with her."

"No they haven't; she's out in the river yender somewhar. The reds tomahawked every one. I kinder had a faint hope she might be among 'em, and I've been follerin' them to find out. I see'd all the Injuns, and that infarnal McGable among 'em. They had plenty of hair hangin' to their girdles, but they hadn't a captive among 'em. That 'ar McGable tried to get Marian Abbot, and because she wouldn't have him, he has done this. I b'lieve he fired the gun that killed her, when I had her in my arm just goin' to jump overboard to take a swim fur it. And, Dick, I swear that I'll never rest till that renegade McGable pays for this."

"I jine you in that!" said Dingle, taking his hand. "We'll hunt him together. He's murdered enough of his own blood, and we'll stop it *right off*."

"I've got to go and tell the old folks of it, and young Mansfield. I know it'll break their hearts, and I'd rather be burnt than do it: but it's got to be done, and I must do it."

"Are you going now?"

"Yas, right away. As soon as I see 'em I'll be back ag'in. I'll wait fur you down at the fort below."

"And what then, Jim?"

"We'll start off on that hunt," said Peterson, in a low tone, and the two rangers took different directions in the forest.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAINT HOPE.

WHEN Peterson communicated the dreadful intelligence of the fate of Marian to her parents, the mother swooned, and for nearly a week remained more in death than life. The father received the shock like the oak when riven by the thunderbolt—firm and unbending, but still shattered in the very heart. He groaned in spirit, but, for the sake of his wife, bore up with superhuman calmness. But it well-nigh killed him; and his wife, when she was pulled from the grasp of death, felt that she would never recover; her heart was broken.

Russel Mansfield bore the affliction like a man. He held up in the presence of others; but there were moments when alone in which he gave way to his great woe. We have no desire to dwell upon this painful scene, but hasten forward.

The resolution of Abbot to emigrate still further to the West, instead of being weakened by this sad calamity, was strengthened into a determination. Why it was, he would almost have been at a loss to tell. We all know that when death for the first time strikes down some one near and dear to us, it is difficult to believe that such is the case; it is a long time before we can bring ourselves to realize it. There is a singular, lingering doubt, the faint shadow of a hope that after all it is not death, and that through the subtle power of medicine the lost one will still return to us. And even after burial, for a long time there will be moments when we give way to the same extraordinary hope and find ourselves indulging in dreams of fancy in which the lost one is again found.

Those who have had a similar experience to this will appreciate the feeling that led Abbot and his stricken wife to emigrate to the scene which was so full of horror to them. The same motive strengthened the determination of Mansfield, although his parents now refused to accompany the party. Several of the other families also refused, so that the company bid fair to be alarmingly small. Peterson had whispered to Mansfield the intention of Dingle and himself of seeking out McGable and revenging themselves upon him, and he was anxious to either join them or be so situated that he could receive the earliest intelligence of their success.

Accordingly, one morning in September, another flat-boat floated away from the village referred to at the commencement of this work, carrying with it four families only, together with young Mansfield. The weather continued fine, and they experienced no difficulty in reaching their destination. Just before they reached the Scioto, a desperate attempt was made to get them ashore. Mansfield, shrewdly

suspecting that it was McGable himself who acted the part of a decoy, raised his rifle with the intention of shooting him; but the wily demon secreted himself before Mansfield could secure his aim. The latter, however, fired, and came so uncomfortably close that the decoy ceased his entreaties, and, by the way of a return for the compliment, a whole volley was fired at the flat-boat by the concealed savages. Some of the bullets struck the boat but did no damage.

The settlement which was the destination of our friends, was a few miles further down the river, and they came in sight of it about the middle of the afternoon. As Peterson had given the settlers notice of their coming they were expected and joyfully welcomed. The flat-boat was swept in to shore and fastened, and with the aid of the willing settlers, its contents removed in an incredibly short space of time. The boat itself was then hauled as far up the bank as possible, and taken carefully apart and its timbers preserved for building purposes.

As this village is to be the location of many of the succeeding incidents of our story, we will here briefly describe it.

The settlement consisted of about twenty cabins, and numbered a hundred inhabitants. A small block-house was erected near the lower end of the village for immediate refuge in case of sudden attack; though the Governor of the territory had ordered a larger one to be erected and continually manned by men well skilled in border warfare. This first block-house was erected in advance of the settlement itself, so as to better guard the approach of an enemy. It stood in a broad clearing, protected on the one hand by a swamp, and the other by the Ohio river. The block-house consisted of two stories. The lower one was about thirty feet square, and the upper one about thirty-three, so that it projected over the lower, giving those within an opportunity of defending the door and windows in case a determined attack was made. A well had been sunk in one corner, so that if besieged they could not be brought to terms by thirst. The roof was so steeply shelving as to prevent any burning missiles from remaining upon it, and the planks themselves were so smooth-shaven that the most agile savage could not maintain a position upon it for an instant. The sides were built of solid green logs of some eighteen or twenty inches in diameter, dove-tailed at the ends in the usual manner, and the interstices filled in with mortar. The doors and windows and shutters were made of ponderous puncheons, secured by massive bars of wood on the inside. The upper story was pierced with loop-holes, through which a large force could keep up a constant fire upon their assailants.

The block-house was surrounded by a substantial wall of palisades. These were made by cutting trees of a foot in diameter into pieces of fifteen feet in length. These pieces were then quartered, hewed off sharply at one end, and driven four feet into the solid ground, leaving eleven feet above. The palisades were kept firmly in their places by means of stout braces and wall-pieces upon the inside; and, as they were set with their smooth side outward, and close together, no force could scale them without the aid of ladders.

A flagstaff stood a few feet from the block-house, and the stars and stripes ever waved from the summit. At the second story was a projection, facing the forest, upon which the sentinel passed most of his time while on duty, and which supported a swivel, so hung that it could be brought to bear upon almost any point from which danger was to be apprehended.

This fort was quite celebrated, and being manned by the Governor with an active force, was much resorted to by the scouts and rangers along the frontiers. Dick Dingle was enrolled as a member of this company, although the Governor and the commander of the fort knew there was no use of undertaking to bring any such character under discipline. He was allowed to go and come when he pleased, and it may be said, in fact, that the whole class of frontier rangers were a set of *Border Zouaves*. They were ever in the most perilous situations, did the most dangerous service, and acknowledged no leader other than their own free will. The commander and several of his leading men had served in the capacity of rangers, and were adepts in Indian warfare.

It was the duty of Dingle to range through the adjoining country, to keep a constant watch upon the movements of the Indians, and to return as often as possible with his report to the commander. At this time there were other scouts performing similar duties in other situations, who have since become celebrated in history. McArthur, White, McClelland, and Davis, and the Wetzel brothers are the ones to whom we refer. They occasionally visited the fort singly, but never in company, and sometimes remained several days in conversation and feasting with their friends.

Peterson, upon his return with Dingle, had had his name enrolled as a member of the company at the block-house; and they already had made several excursions in company. When Abbot and his friends arrived at the settlement, these two scouts had just returned from a journey up the Scioto valley to one of the Shawnee towns. The genial settlers, having known of the coming of their new friends, showed their good-will by erecting several cabins and presenting them to the new-comers immediately upon their arrival. By dusk, Abbot, with his wife and Mansfield, were snugly domiciled in theirs, and ready to join their neighbors, on the morrow, in clearing the forest, or whatever their duty might chance to be.

Although Abbot had not seen Peterson, he had heard that he was in the settlement, and sent for

him in the evening. The good-hearted fellow had purposely kept out of the way, for fear that his presence would be painful to them, but upon hearing the wish of Abbot, he immediately went to his house.

The meeting could not but be painful upon both sides. There was a manifest restraint about the ranger, for he well knew the feelings that must be awakened by his presence. The conversation turned upon ordinary subjects, and each carefully refrained from any allusion that might bring up the matter that was in the mind of every one.

In the course of a half-hour or so, the quick eye of Mrs. Abbot saw her presence was a restraint upon something her husband wished to say; and she made an excuse for withdrawing and retired for the night.

After she had gone, utter silence fell upon all.

"Jim," said Abbot, glancing furtively around, "Jim, I must once more speak about that."

"Wal?" queried the ranger, uneasily.

"I must ask you once more to narrate, as particularly as is in your power, the account of the attack upon the flat-boat, and the death of Marian. I will not ask you to give any thing else but that alone."

"I dunno as I can tell any thing more, but, however, I can tell that over again if you want it," and thereupon he proceeded to give, with fearful vividness, the dying words and actions of Marian Abbot. The father heard him all through without a syllable of interruption, keeping his eye fixed upon the smoldering fire before him.

"You think, Jim, then, that she is—she must be dead?"

"Why, Abbot, s'posen I had fifty bullets right smack through this hyer noddle of mine, and you should ax me if I had any s'picious I'd survive, and I should tell you I was as dead as a door-nail, wouldn't you believe me?"

"Of course."

"Wal, then, though I'm sorry to say it, there ain't a bit more hope for her. She never see'd the devils that climbed over the boat. She died afore I got away twenty feet."

"You are certain of it?"

"Yes, sir; I'm certain."

"You must wonder at my talking thus, Jim; I have no hopes either; I have given her up since. I have still one wish—to know what happened to her body."

"She was thrown overboard with the others."

"You did not see that done, Jim, and can not be sure of it."

The ranger was about to contradict him, and tell that he had followed the murderers and seen that they bore no body with them; but he did not, and Abbot continued:

"It is this doubt—this uncertainty that still troubles me. When that has been cleared up I shall never speak of the subject again. Russel has told me that you and Dingle are going to seek revenge upon McGable?"

"We aren't goin' to seek it; we are goin' to get it."

"I profess to be a Christian, and the Bible teaches me that vengeance is not for us, but for One alone. And, Jim, I can really say that I have no desire that McGable should suffer at your hands. God knows that he has broken two hearts, but the time will come when he will have to answer for it."

"That's my idea, exactly, and I reckon as how 'twill be a little sooner than he expects."

"He knows, if any human being does, the fate of Marian. Obtain, if possible, first of all, the truth from him."

"I can't see just now, Abbot, how that's gwine to be done."

"Take him captive and bring him in, and we will make him answer. Do you not think you and your companion may succeed in capturing him?"

"P'raps so—bein' it's your wish we'll do our best to do it."

"Get him, if you can, Jim, and you will confer a favor that I shall never be able to repay."

"Never mind about that; *the thing will be done!*"

Shortly after this, Peterson took his departure.

CHAPTER V.

THE MYSTERIOUS WARNING.

It was a mild September night in 179—. The day had been one of those warm, hazy ones which sometimes appear at that season of the year, and the night had set with delicious coolness. There was a faint moon in the heavens, and several flaky clouds were drifting past it, causing their fantastic shadows to glide like phantoms over the settlement.

As the hour had grown late, there were few, if any, persons stirring through the village. A few pencils of light issued from the upper port-holes of the block-house, showing that those inside were still up; and a hearty laugh ringing out now and then, told as plainly that they were engaged in their usual story-telling and joking. Peterson was inside relating one of his earlier experiences, which infinitely amused them all, the commander not hesitating to join in the merriment.

On the outside, the measured tread of the sentinel was heard, and his form could be seen against the wall of the block-house, as he walked to and fro upon the platform. His keen eye never failed to take in at each turn every noticeable object before him. At one end of the projection, he had a view of the river now glistening like liquid silver; but during the remainder of his walk, his vision rested upon the broad, gloomy, murmuring forest, stretching mile after mile before him, until, at last, it joined the sky away in the faint horizon. It was Dick Dingle, whose watch extended until midnight.

While in the act of turning on his heel, at the end of the platform, he suddenly stopped as something suspicious caught his eye. Far up the Ohio, he saw a

small, dark body in the water. At first, it had the appearance of a large bird swimming over the surface of the water, which the hunter well knew was a canoe approaching from the Ohio side. A slight protuberance near the middle, convinced him that there was but one person in it. When about three-fourths of the way across, the sparkle of the ashen oars could be seen, as they dipped in the water. A moment after, it entered the line of shadows upon the Kentucky shore and disappeared.

Dingle's suspicion was aroused. The long silence of the savages had led him to believe they were preparing to strike a great blow. Neither he nor Peterson had been scouting lately, and he had no means of discovering their intentions.

He continued walking with the same measured, deliberate tread backward and forward, apparently watching nothing and yet maintaining a more than usual scrutiny upon the river and forest. An hour elapsed, without bringing any new suspicion to him; but he was well aware that this delay was as good reason for apprehension, as could have been the noise of approach.

"You don't catch Dingle asleep when there is a red about. Now let's see. Dingle, you old fool, what do you s'pose the imps are up to now? Jest go to meditatin', will you, and cipher it out. In the first place, and afore any thing else, they're up to *sunkthin'*; and that ar' *sunkthin'* is the devil. Consequently, it's a p'inted fact, that they're up to the devil, and therefore there's *sunkthin'* in the wind; so mind your eye and look out for lead. Wish they'd hurry up, 'cause it's gettin' well on to that green feller's watch, and I'd like to have an idee of their intentions of they've no particular objections."

By this time, it was near midnight, and shortly after, a man appeared beside him to relieve him of his watch. This new-comer was known as Jenkins, and was what the rangers termed a "green hand," that is, he had seen little or nothing of Indian service, and was not one who could be relied upon in an emergency. Several practical jokes had been played upon him, the result of which had given one or two a suspicion that he was lacking in courage, and would show the white feather if hard pressed.

"Careful and not get a-snoozin' to-night," remarked Dingle.

"Why? You don't suppose I would, do you?"

"Didn't know but what you might; thought I'd tell you, anyway, 'cause it *won't do to shut your eyes to-night.*"

"Why? What's up, eh?" queried Jenkins, eagerly.

"Oh, nothin' in particklar; only I've seen Injins to-night."

"Pshaw! don't say so? Your joking, Dick?"

"Ef you think so, jest think on, but ef you don't see sights afore mornin' it'll be 'cause you can't see; that's all," and Dingle turned to enter the block-house.

"Oh say, Dick, that ain't fair!" said Jenkins, laying his hand on his shoulder.

"What's the matter? Ain't scart, be you?" demanded the ranger, confronting him with an angry countenance.

"Oh no, I ain't scart—not at all; I only want you to tell a feller all about it. You might do that I think."

"Wal, then, I see'd four or five Shawnees skulking out yonder near the wood, tryin' to draw bead on me, and I had to do some tall dodging to hender them. You'll have to hop around rather agile, but I guess you can steer clear. Ef you git hit, holler and I'll haul you in and let you die inside."

"Oh, thunder! hold on, Dingle, don't go and leave a feller this way. I don't think it's a fair shake at all."

"What in blazes do you want?" demanded the ranger, again indignantly facing him.

"Why, I was a-goin to say—just to kind of make the observation, you know—that—perhaps—that is—I would like to know if you wouldn't just as lief stay here a while?"

"What for?"

"Oh, just for company. I'll do the same favor for you some of these times."

"I never want anybody out hyer when I'm standin' watch."

And the scout turned and entered the block-house. But it was by no means his intention to intrust the safety of the settlement to such hands as Jenkins's; he only wished to test his courage, and create a little diversion for his own individual benefit. He shut the door and listened.

He could hear Jenkins walking along the platform, stamping his feet bravely upon it, and whistling as loudly as his lips would permit. Dingle ventured to open the door very slightly and peep out. He saw him with hands thrust deep down in his pockets, his rifle leaning against the block-house, and shooting his feet far out in advance, and slapping them down on the planks with such effect as to set the men within growling and snarling at each other, as they half awoke from their slumbers. His hat was jammed down on the back of his head, his hair dashed away from his forehead, the white of his eyes only being visible, as the pupils were constantly turned toward the dreaded wood. His mouth resembled the letter O, fringed around the edges, as he resolutely maintained its position. "Old Hundred" came out loudly, the fall of each foot being emphasized by a desperate burst of wind and music, and a spasmodic jerk of the head now and then. When the whistle, at times, became more windy than musical, he rested his lips by communings with himself.

"Darn the Injins! I wish they were all dead! I can't see what they want poking round here when I'm standing watch. If I catch sight of one, I'll bet he will wish he never heard of Pete Jenkins! Let

me see: I was turning 'Old Hundred,' I believe." The tune was now resumed and continued a short time, when he again broke forth. "If them Injins will only stay away till morning I won't care, though it would be all the same to me, and perhaps just as well if they didn't come then, either. I was just thinking—hello! Jerusalem! I seen something move then, as sure as the world!"

Dingle, who had been listening all the while, now judged that it was time to venture forth, and, closing the door behind him, stood upon the platform. Jenkins, whose eyes were turned toward the wood, saw nothing of him, until he tumbled over his bent form.

"Thunderation! that you, Dingle? what you doing here?" he exclaimed, scrambling to his feet again.

"Seen anything?"

"I thought I did, out yonder near the edge of the wood."

Dingle looked intently toward the point indicated a few moments, and then became satisfied Jenkins was right—a person was there. While gazing he purposely kept his body concealed by the guard around the platform. He continued his watch upon the suspicious object, and at last satisfied himself of the identity of the person who had thus alarmed his friend.

"All right!" he muttered to himself. "It's the Frontier Angel. She's got *sunkthin'* to tell, an' she's waitin' to see ef I'm about. Howsumever, I'll keep shady awhile, just to see how this long-legged feller hyer will jump when she gives notice she's around."

"What makes you stoop down, Dick?" whispered Jenkins.

"I can see better; ef you're afraid you'd better stoop, too."

"I ain't afraid at all, only— Oh, Lord, I'm shot!" suddenly exclaimed Jenkins, falling down. Dingle was not surprised; he had heard the twang of a bow, the whizz of the arrow, and now saw it sticking several feet above him in the wood of the block-house. Thus that mysterious being, known along the border as the "Frontier Angel," gave notice of her presence.

"Get up, you fool," he commanded, giving his moaning companion a kick, and now thoroughly provoked at the cowardice he had shown. "Get up, I tell you. Nobody has fired at you, or tried to hit you."

"Didn't they? Come to think, I believe they didn't; but the fact is, Dingle, I've been subject to fits ever since I was a boy—darnation! do you mean to say I fell on purpose?" demanded Jenkins, suddenly regaining his upright position and his courage at the same time, at finding he was unharmed.

"No; but it's kinder queerish the way you fell."

"Yes, them plaguy falling fits take me any time."

"Never mind about the fits, or I'll give you some more. You stay hyer and keep watch while I go down to the gate."

"What—what you going to do there?"

"There's somebody as wants to see me."

"You won't be gone long, will you? Who is it?"

"The one that fired that arrow up there at you."

"Jerusalem! and so they shot at me after all. I knowed so."

"Wal, keep that jaw of yours still, or you'll git shot at, and won't be missed, either. I'll be back pretty soon."

Dingle descended and made his way to the gate at the palisades, to receive the message of the Frontier Angel.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FRONTIER ANGEL—THE SHAWNEE.

The person referred to in the preceding chapter as the Frontier Angel, had received that appellation from the scouts and rangers, who had known her for several years. We say had known her, but beyond the mere fact of her existence, nothing was known. Who she was or where she had come from was a mystery to all. She was ever painted and dressed in the fantastic costume of an Indian, but many supposed her to be a white person, and gave as a reason that her language was precisely the same as that used by themselves. She discarded entirely the extravagant, high-flown figures so much in vogue among the North American Indians, and which often renders their meaning unintelligible to ordinary persons. She was always alone, and rarely if ever seen in the daytime. The whole object of her life seemed to be that of befriending the settlers. More than once her timely warnings had saved scores of whites from the fury of the savages. Sometimes she would make her appearance among the settlements in the Scioto Valley, and after giving full intelligence of the movements of their enemies, would take her departure. The next to be heard of her, would be that she had performed a similar office for the villages further east. She became known to all the rangers, nearly all of whom regarded her not as either a white person or an Indian, but as a spirit—an angel; and it was this that she had gained the name that we have mentioned. These hardy, but superstitious beings, revered her as something far above them, whose touch would be instant death. No wonder that Dingle felt some trepidation, as he hastened down, unbarred the massive gate, and saw her standing beside him.

"What news have you to-night?" he asked.

"Much news. Why have you remained at home so long?"

"I've no reason, I s'pose."

"Then hasten to the woods, for there is much for you to do. The Shawnees and Wyandots are making great preparations for taking the war-path."

"Whar am they kickin' up this muss?"

"At Piqua."

"Yas; wal, I'll pay them a visit. Anything more?"

"That is all. I will now depart."

Dingle unbarred the gate, allowed her to pass out, and after securing it, made his way to the block-house again. As he passed out on the platform, Jenkins demanded:

"Who is that you was talking with?"

"A gal that comes down to see me once in a while."

"An Injin?"

"A half-breed—splendid critter."

"Jerusalem! she looked purty. What in the name of all that's human made her shoot that arrer at me?"

"She thought you'd jist come out to show yerself and try and cut me out. It made her all-fired mad."

"Did you tell her all about it?"

"Yas; but I can't tell you what she said. I'm goin' in to sleep now. Don't whistle so loud, nor slap your hoofs down so, or git to talkin'. I might come out and make you shut up."

With these words, the ranger opened the door of the block-house and entered, leaving Jenkins completely dumbfounded at what he had said.

"By George! how did he know what I said? I'll bet that infernal Injin gal is down there yet, and waiting for a chance to shoot. I'll kill her, if she tries it, just as sure as I live. She'll wish she never knowed anything of Pete Jenkins."

But no attempt was made upon the sentinel's life, and when the morning dawned, the forest and river wore their usual appearance.

In the morning, Dingle imparted the message of the Frontier Angel to the commander of the post, and offered to visit the Piqua village and ascertain the meaning of their movements.

"If she says there is mischief afoot, you may depend that there is. Yes, Dingle, you had better go. Take who you please, find out what you can, and get back as soon as possible."

The visit of this strange being was only a night or two after the interview between Abbot and Peterson, so that the latter had not yet started upon his hunt after McGable. Upon consulting with Dingle, it was agreed between them that, as there was no need of hurrying in such a matter, they would defer their expedition until after their return from Piqua. The safety of the settlement was paramount to all other considerations. Besides, it was very probable that the renegade was in the village named, and they were just as likely to accomplish the object of both their journeys at the same time. The rangers held a consultation, and the conclusion they came to took all by surprise. It was that Peterson should visit the Shawnee town in Paint Creek valley, while Dingle, in company with the redoubtable Jenkins, would reconnoiter Piqua. There was wisdom in the plan certainly, but many thought it singular that the two should separate, when they had never been known to do such a thing before when in service.

The Shawnees were the great enemies of the whites, and to them may be traced nearly all of the long and bloody wars on the frontier. They were a vindictive, revengeful, "restless people, delighting in wars." Their very name, as has been remarked, was a word of terror or of execration to the early settlers among the canebrakes of Kentucky or upon the rich bottoms of Ohio.

When this country was discovered, the Shawnees occupied the southern part of Georgia and Florida. Here they, at last, became so obnoxious to the other Indians by their continual murders and robberies, that a combination of the most powerful tribes—the Choctaws, Cherokees, and Creeks—was effected, and perpetual, unceasing war was declared against them. Finding the country too hot to hold them, the Shawnees emigrated north, settling on the Ohio and its tributaries. The Wyandots welcomed them, and they increased to a mighty and powerful nation, retaining their characteristic traits. From the commencement of the old French war, in 1775, down to the final struggle between Tecumseh and the whites, nearly sixty years after, they were continually engaged in some murderous foray interrupted only by a dozen years of quiet, succeeding the treaty of Wayne.

Like all large Indian nations, the Shawnees were subdivided into tribes, and these subdivided into families. The names of but four of these tribes are now known: the Piqua, Kiskapococke, Chillicothe and Meguachake. Piqua, in the Indian tongue, means a *man rising from the ashes*, and there is a tradition among them, that it was thus the division originated.

They had a large village at the head of Massie's Creek, a short distance north of where Xenia now stands, and another named Piqua, on Mad River, a few miles below Springfield. Their principal headquarters were in the valley of Paint Creek and Scioto river.

The simple preparations of the scouts were made, and it was agreed they should start in a few hours upon their perilous journey.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

PETERSON'S destination being the Scioto valley, he left the settlement and proceeded eastward, up the Ohio, until the mouth of the Scioto was reached, when he prosecuted his journey in a northerly direction. Leaving him to continue his duty, we will follow the fortunes of the other two.

Dingle had two reasons for taking Jenkins with him. The first was for his own good, and the second was for his own—*that is the ranger's—amusement.* He counted on little difficulty in ascertaining all that he wished, and believed that his companion would be so tractable in his hands that little trouble need be apprehended from his erratic disposition. His

plan was to proceed westward, following the course of the Ohio, until the mouth of the Little Miami was reached, up which he proceeded in a canoe. As he had often visited the same town, he took occasion, when upon one of his expeditions, to "borrow" an Indian canoe, as he expressed it, and concealed it at the mouth of this river to be used for the purpose named.

"Confound it! what did you want to take me along for?" demanded Jenkins, spitefully, after they were fairly in the wood.

"Why, to scout around, and observe the peculiarities of the Shawnees," replied Dingle.

"Yes, s'pose so! darned if I don't shoot every one I see!"

"Good! give us your paw on that, Jenkins; you're some, after all."

"After all what?" demanded the wrathful man, not at all relishing the eagerness with which the ranger took his threat.

"After all the dodgin' and sneakin' you've done when the reds were around."

"See here now!" exclaimed Jenkins, stepping in front of and confronting the ranger. "I want to know what you mean by that? That's a reflection upon my courage which I never intend to permit."

Dingle, concluding it best not to offend him at present, answered: "I meant the time you fell down so flat when the Frontier Angel fired her arrer at you."

"Do you know what made me do it, sir?"

"Oh! yes—I mind me now, you had a fit just then."

"Well, sir, don't let me hear anything more about that, then; I have explained all about them fits, and you must remember."

"Wal, never mind, Jenkins, it won't do to get them now, coz why, if you do, when you come to again, you'll find you've cotched another kind of fits—wal, you will, ole feller."

"Do you s'pose, Dick, they'll watch us close?" asked Jenkins, in a tone so changed from his bragadocio style to that of earnest inquiry, that Dingle could not conceal a smile.

"Mighty clus, you'll find out. Howsumever, ef you tend to your business and mind what I tell you, you'll come out all right, I guess."

"My gracious! I wish we was only on our way back. I don't like Injins no way you can fix it."

"I don't neither, so less pike ahead and hold in for a while."

The journey continued in silence. They were on the Ohio side of the river, having crossed it at the commencement of their expedition. Late in the afternoon they were obliged to swim a small stream that put in from the Ohio. This was accomplished easily, as both were excellent swimmers, Jenkins fully equal to the ranger. On the shore of this they halted, and spent a few moments in eating a portion of the food they had brought with them. By this time darkness had settled over the forest, but the moon was quite strong, and they kept on for several hours. At the end of that time they reached a solitary block-house, standing on a clearing, where it was the intention to shortly commence a settlement. There was a small force stationed there by the Governor of the territory some months previous. The sentinel was on the look-out and detected the approach of Dingle as soon as the latter became aware of the block-house. He was instantly challenged, but a word set the matter right, and in a moment one of the force descended, unbarred the gate, and joyfully welcomed him in. Lew Wetzel, to whom we have before referred, was in the block-house, and the meeting between him and Dingle was cordial on both sides. There were eight soldiers besides, all adepts in Indian warfare. The commander produced his cups, poured out whisky, and none, save Jenkins, needed an invitation to drink. The latter was a perfect novice, and with wondering eyes followed the motions and actions of Dingle. The consequence was, before any one suspected it, he commenced nodding, and shortly dropped upon the floor. One of the men rolled him into the corner, where he slept until morning.

The journey was resumed early on the morrow, and continued without incident worthy of note until nightfall. Not an Indian or white man was encountered through the day. Just at dusk, they reached a river, which as Dingle informed Jenkins, was the Little Miami.

"My gracious! has that got to be swum, too?" asked the latter, in astonishment.

"No! we'll row over, I guess."

"Row over? How can we do that?"

"Don't ax too many questions and you'll see."

With this, Dingle proceeded some distance upstream, and then halted before a large, tangled mass of undergrowth. Here he stooped down, and pulled out a small birchen canoe, almost as light as paper. A couple of oars lay beside it, which he instructed Jenkins to bring forth. As he dropped the boat in the river, it danced as uneasily and buoyantly as an egg-shell.

"Where under the sun did you get that thing?" asked Jenkins.

"That belongs to the Frontier Angel. It's the one we used to go sparking in when we was young."

"Pshaw, Dick, you're joking," replied Jenkins, incredulously.

"I should think you knowed enough of me to know that I never joke when I'm scouting it. Jest jump in while I give it a shove."

Now if any of our readers have ever seen a small Indian canoe, they will detect at once the mischievous object of Dingle in asking his companion to "jump into" this one. It is an impossibility for a person who does not understand them, to spring in without going overboard. It is precisely similar to

putting on a pair of skates for the first time. Unless you have tried it before, and know how to do it, you are sure to be deceived. But Jenkins had no suspicions, judging from the last remark of Dingle that he was quite serious.

So he made a spring, struck the thing near the bow, and it shot like a bolt backward in to shore, and he disappeared with a loud splash beneath the surface of the water.

"Blast that boat! what made it do that?" he spluttered, scrambling in to shore again.

"You're a smart one!" remarked Dingle, without changing a muscle of his face. "I'd vise you to practice a little at gettin' in a boat, when you've got time. I s'pose I'll have to hold it for you, this time."

And so he did, seizing it by the stern, and holding it firmly while Jenkins carefully deposited himself in the front part. Dingle then stepped in, seated himself near the middle, and dipping his oars into the water, shot rapidly toward the opposite bank.

It was now quite dark, and by keeping near the center of the stream, he felt secure from observation from either shore. An hour or two he sped swiftly forward, encountering no suspicious object, and exchanging not a syllable with his companion. After a time the moon arose, and as it slowly rolled above the wilderness, it shed such a flood of light as to make it extremely dangerous to continue as heretofore. The tall forest trees towered up on both sides, throwing a wall of shadow far out into the stream. Dingle ran his canoe in under protection of these, upon the left bank, and dipped his oars more deeply and silently, commanding Jenkins not to utter a syllable.

Dingle paddled hour after hour, until toward midnight he touched the bank, sprung out and exchanged places with Jenkins, who took his turn at the paddle. At first he made several feints, nearly upsetting the canoe, but in a short time he became quite an expert, and did his duty without a murmur. Another exchange, another long pull, and the ranger ran his canoe in to shore, pulling it up and concealing it on the bank. Day was dawning and they had reached that point where it was necessary to take to the forest again, and strike across toward Mad river.

In doing this, our friends were compelled to pass the Indian village mentioned as being a short distance below where Xenia now stands. This being a smaller and less important one than Piqua, Dingle concluded to visit it on his return. The river at the point where they disembarked made a bend to the eastward, so that by taking a direct north-west course toward Mad river, it was not even necessary to make a *detour* to avoid it.

They had now progressed so far upon their journey that Dingle knew they could reach Piqua long before night. Accordingly he crawled into a dense mass of undergrowth, followed by Jenkins, who carefully restored the bushes behind him to their upright position, so as to remove all signs of their trail. Here they both lay down and slept soundly.

Dingle possessed that power, which is so singular and yet so easily acquired, of waking at the precise moment he wished. About noon he opened his eyes, arose to a sitting position, gave Jenkins a kick, and ordered him to make ready to start. After a hearty meal upon the last of the venison they had brought with them, they emerged from their resting-place and once more resumed their journey.

As they gradually approached the neighborhood of the Indian settlement, Dingle became more and more cautious in his movements, until Jenkins was in a perfect tremor of apprehension.

"Don't fall behind!" admonished the ranger, unmercifully.

"My gracious, I won't! Every time you stop, I bump against you. I've mashed my nose already."

"Never mind; we're gettin' nigher every minute."

"I know we are, and that's what troubles me so much. If we were only going the other way I wouldn't mind it."

Several times they came upon Indian trails, some of which were so fresh that Dingle made several *detours*, painfully tedious to Jenkins, who every minute was getting into a feverish state. Before dark they ascended a sort of ridge, which seemed the boundary of a valley on the left. Jenkins followed his guide so closely that he hardly took his eyes off him, much less did he know where he was going. He saw they were ascending a rising ground, and that, after about an hour's labor he came to a halt.

"Take a look down there!" whispered Dingle, pointing the bushes in front of him. Jenkins followed the direction of his finger and saw spread out before him, in the valley below, the entire Indian village.

It was evident to any eye that the savages below them were making preparations for some hostile expedition. Dingle judged it was against their own village from what the Frontier Angel had said. Most of the warriors were collected upon a large, open space near one end of the village. Here several of their orators—*stump speakers* is a better term—were constantly haranguing them. The excited gesticulation, the bobbing of the head, and now and then a word could be heard by our two friends in concealment. The men were arrayed in the gaudy hideousness of war-paint, and to all appearances hugely delighted with the oratory that greeted their ears. Men were continually arriving and departing, sometimes nearly a score passing into the wood, and then reappearing in a short time again. Every second several shouts or yells pierced the air. The whole village was in commotion, and Dingle could as well have departed at once with the information that the Shawnees were again taking the war-path, and the settlement was most probably

the object of their fury. But he determined to know more before he went back.

As it was getting darker and the shrubbery and the undergrowth were so dense as to afford a sure concealment in spite of the moon, which rose at a late hour, he felt no hesitation at making a much nearer approach.

In a short time they were within a hundred yards of the upper end. Here they both nestled down, and waited some time before making a further movement.

"Keep powerful quiet, while I look around!" admonished Dingle, crouching down and commencing to move off in the darkness.

"Here, hold on a minute," whispered Jenkins, eagerly catching hold of his hunting-dress; "how long are you going to be gone?"

"I don't know—sh!"

The footsteps of some one were now heard breaking through the bushes. Dingle and Jenkins bent low, and in a moment discerned, looming up against the light in the village, the dark form of an Indian.

The hunter loosened his knife in his belt, for an encounter seemed unavoidable. The Indian came right straight ahead, in a line toward them; but when within ten feet, unconsciously to himself, perhaps, he turned to the left and passed on, thus escaping a collision and his own doom at the same time.

"Now don't stir from hyer till I come back," whispered Dingle, again.

"How long are you going to be gone?"

"P'raps an hour or two."

"What must I do all that time?"

"Why, lay still—don't budge an inch, 'cept you want to lose your ha'r."

"Oh! I don't want to lose it. S'pose the Injins come poking around here, what's to be done then?"

"Keep docile, and like as not they won't see you; but if they does, why, jump up, give 'em a lunge with your knife, and put to the woods. You can run fast 'nough to give 'em the slip. In coorse, you'll have to make some tall dodgin' to do it, but I guess you are able."

With this, Dingle moved away as silently as a snake, and disappeared instantly. He made his way toward the opposite side of the village. It was not his intention to proceed thus far at first, but circumstances compelled him. It seemed impossible to gain the view he wished. At every point, some obstruction presented itself. The Indians, too, were so continually passing through the wood, that discovery sometimes appeared inevitable. They made their appearance so suddenly, that they were not seen until almost upon him, and then it was only by the most labored caution that they could be avoided. Several times, indeed, had it come to that point, that he clutched his knife, and stooped to spring; but kind fortune still screened him.

Dingle had been absent about a couple of hours, and had reached a spot from which he believed he could obtain all the information he wished, when he was startled by the report of a rifle, and a series of yells from the quarter in which he had left Jenkins! He heard the rush of feet through the bushes and the signals of alarm all about him.

"That all-fired fool has got himself in a fix," muttered the ranger, retreating several yards, so as to be concealed by the wood, and hurrying around toward the spot in which he had left him. He reached it in a few minutes, but all signs of commotion had ceased. An extraordinary stillness reigned over the village. He signaled for Jenkins, but no answer was returned. He found, at last, the precise spot in which he had left him. But he was gone, most certainly.

"Yas, the fool's in a fix, sure. Sarved him right. He'll l'arn sunkthin' afore he gets back to the settlement again."

CHAPTER VIII. A MAN IN TROUBLE.

DINGLE waited in the wood until morning, searching and signaling for Jenkins, but without success. He hoped at first that he had made his escape; but he was compelled, after carefully watching the village for a long time, to the belief that he had been captured. In fact, it was certainly with the ranger. He understood the actions of the Shawnees well enough to be satisfied upon that point.

"Now, Dingle, what's to be done?" queried the ranger meditatively. "He's in their claws—that's a sure case, and it don't look right for you to leave him thar. But jest hold on a minute. The great question is this: which ar' to be saved—him or the whole settlement? Ef I stay hyer, pokin' round for him, like as not I'll get cotched myself—no, I won't either, for Dick Dingle don't get that thing done to him. The reds ar' goin' on a ha'r-raise, that's sure; and they'll leave Jenkins till they come back afore they roast him. Consequently, he'll have time to look round and git acquainted with his friends, and p'raps make a bargain to let him off on a visit. No, Dingle, you must make tracks fur home powerful fast."

This decision arrived at, the ranger lost no time in putting it into execution. He knew he could not get much start of his enemies; and, although they would be armed at the settlement, yet it was imperatively necessary they should have more definite knowledge of the intended assault. Slinging his rifle over his shoulder, he turned his face to the south and plunged into the forest.

In the mean time Peter Jenkins had managed to fall into an unpleasant predicament.

Upon the departure of Dingle, he made up his mind to obey every letter of his instructions. Accordingly, he squeezed himself into the smallest space possible, and curled obediently up on the ground. He lay thus perhaps a half-hour, when he

fell sound asleep. This was unintentional; but the fatigue of the expedition, and the time he had passed without slumber, were too much for him, and he finally succumbed.

He would have slept, in all probability, until the return of Dingle, had it not been for a purely accidental circumstance. As his slumbers grew more heavy, he gave two or three jerks, and finally straightened out upon his back. In doing this, he naturally threw his hands backward, and by the merest accident in the world, struck a toad that sat blinking a foot or two distant. The creature made a startled leap and plunged down square in his face, but immediately sprung off again. It, however, seemed to awaken Jenkins, who rose to the sitting position, and entirely unmindful of where he was, commenced talking, in a mumbling tone to himself.

"Like to know who that feller was that hit me in the face. Liked to knock me out of bed; s'pose it was Dingle, though—just like him—makes my nose feel awful cool. Queer a feller can't sleep when he wants to—all-fired mean to 'sturb a person that way. Lay over on your own side, Dick. Hello! he ain't here! Thunderation! where am I?"

He stared bewilderingly about him. Gradually a recollection of his situation came to him. And then he was filled with apprehension lest he had betrayed himself. He listened carefully for a few minutes, but hearing nothing, judged that matters were all right; and, as he was excessively sleepy, he dropped languidly back again, and was falling rapidly into a state of unconsciousness, when he was waked again.

The fact was he had been overheard by a couple of brawny Shawnees who, at that moment, were passing within a few feet of him. They dropped noiselessly to the earth, and commenced making their way toward him. In the mean time, one of those little, active, prying dogs, that are always bobbing around an Indian village, ran fearlessly up to the prostrate man, poked his cold nose against his cheek, and gave a loud bark that electrified Jenkins completely. Remembering the parting admonition of Dingle, to "fire and run," in case of discovery, he seized his gun, blazed away at the dog, and turned on his heel.

Even then he might have effected his escape, had it not been for the dog mentioned. The Indians suspecting he was a scout, were taken all aback by the unexpected manner in which he acted, and hesitated so long before following, that, as we said, he might have escaped, had it not been for the dog. The creature was unhurt by his shot, and with a yelp of alarm, sprang in front of him. Jenkins was too confused to notice him, the dog got entangled between his legs, and he pitched headlong to the ground. Before he could rise the Indians were upon him, and yelling with exultation.

"We kill—if fight—no run," muttered one in broken English.

One of the savages had already secured his rifle; and, as he arose, one stood on either side of him and took a firm hold of his arms. By this time there were a score of other savages around, all dancing and yelling; and in the midst of them Jenkins was marched into the center of the Indian village.

Immediately a score of Shawnees scattered into the wood, to ascertain whether there were any more whites lurking in the vicinity, while Jenkins was hurried into a lodge, thrown upon his face, hands tied securely behind him, and his feet locked as tightly together as if they had been screwed in a vise.

"Consarn it, what's the use in serving a feller that way? You ugly old heathen, standing there by the door, grinning at me, just loosen these cords will you?" said Jenkins. "The Indian still paying no attention to his entreaties, Jenkins supposed he did not understand the English language; and he repeated his request in a louder tone, as though that would assist his understanding. But with no better effect. "I don't want the cords loosened—wouldn't have them untied if you wanted to do it," he added, sullenly.

As his captors still evinced no desire to do anything more than watch him, he resigned himself to his fate, and ceased speaking.

The night wore slowly away. Sleep, under the circumstances, was out of the question, and Jenkins contented himself—if the expression is allowable—with maintaining a moody silence, varied now and then by a gratuitous insult to those around, which, luckily for him, they failed to comprehend.

While this sleepless guard was being kept there was another tribunal, as sleepless and vastly more important to him.

In the chieftain's lodge were assembled half a hundred warriors, debating the matter of life or death. It could hardly be said that there was a debate, for all agreed that their victim should die—agreed that he should not only die, but *be burned at the stake!*

They were considering only *when* this should be done. It could not be expected that there would be a single dissenting voice as to his fate, and there was none. But the question was whether the war expedition should be deferred by consummating the torture, or whether it should be left until they returned. It was their intention to start upon the morrow for the settlement which we have so often referred to; and rightly fearing that every hour of delay was a day's gain to their intended victims, it was at last decided that Jenkins should be kept until their return, when he should suffer the awful torture of death by fire. They knew their passions would be inflamed to that pitch that the agonies of the prisoner's torment would be the most exquisite pleasure they could enjoy.

Most fortunate, indeed, for Jenkins, was it that the renegade was not present at that council. Had he

been, he never would have seen the light of another morning; for he had learned long before that no white prisoner was sure to them until he had been a victim to their vengeance. The renegade had left only a day or two before for the Indian towns in the Scioto valley, and consequently knew nothing of Jenkins's capture.

When the morning dawned, there was great commotion throughout the village. The final preparations were made for the departure of the war party. Jenkins heard the confusion and clamor around him, but was in no mood to care what they were doing. A sort of stolid indifference had succeeded to the excessive fear he had at first evinced.

"I don't care what they do! They can burn and eat me, if they want to! Let 'em blaze away!"

Shortly after daybreak the war party departed. About a dozen men remained behind to guard the village, and see that no attempt was made to free the prisoner, while a whole host of squaws and children raised Bedlam. The lodge in which Jenkins was confined was completely beset by them. At first his guards allowed them to torment him in their characteristic manner—such as pulling his hair, pinching, and striking him with sticks. Finally his patience became exhausted.

"By thunder! if you don't take these things off I'll kill every one of them!" he exclaimed, furiously, wriggling and tugging at his bonds.

The Indians enjoyed the sport hugely, especially the impotent wrath he displayed. They made no attempt to restrain the excited multitude, until they became so numerous and boisterous, that for their own convenience, they cleared the lodge of the tormentors.

"You'd better done that just then," said the prisoner. "I was just getting ready to knock some of their confounded brains out."

At noon he was given some meat and drink, and he ate ravenously, for his situation seemed to have little effect upon his appetite. His usual fear and subsequent indifference had now given way to a perfect recklessness. Goaded to madness, he cared not a straw what he did. He swore within himself that he would make his escape before morning, though how to effect it wasn't plain even to himself.

His guard maintained their sullen watch until dark, when the clamorous crowd again commenced pressing around. They were restrained from entering, but they continued yelling and pressing against the lodge till, all at once, the side gave way, and fell inward. Those pressing against it were so numerous that they poured irresistibly forward, piling in a mass upon Jenkins, kicking and struggling to free themselves, and making the confusion perfectly horrid by their yells. To make the matter still worse, the sudden incoming of the multitude extinguished the burning torches, so that all was total darkness.

Jenkins, feeling the mass upon him, became doubly enraged, and made furious efforts to free himself. But the cords were too firm, and he finally gave up in despair.

Immediately he felt some one fingering around him; and to his inexpressible astonishment found the cords at his feet and hands cut, and he was now perfectly free. He lost no time in taking advantage of this providential intercourse of some one. Springing to his feet, he turned to make a dash through the open side of the lodge. At that moment a soft hand touched his, and some one, pulling his head downward, whispered eagerly in his ear:

"Don't stop! run as fast as you can!"

"You may bet I'll do that," he replied, although he scarcely heard his own voice in the deafening uproar around him.

Of course, in the darkness, it was impossible to distinguish the prisoner. When the building crashed inward, two or three savages hurried off for torches, while several more sprang to the opening to intercept his flight, should he attempt it. As they knew his bonds were too firm to be broken, they had little fear of this, but adopted these precautions in obedience to their cautious instincts. But Jenkins avoided them all. He made a spring outward, a literal "leap in the dark," ran a short distance, until, as might be expected, he brought up all standing against a lodge that happened to be in his way. There were none inside, for the tumult in the village had drawn them out, and he suffered no injury except a few scratches. Without stopping to ascertain the damages, he made an abrupt turn to the left, and hurrying onward, found himself in a few seconds clear of the town and in the dark wood.

The lights were soon recovered and brought to the lodge from which he had fled. Held in the entrance, they revealed a swarm of dark, struggling bodies, piled pell-mell upon each other. Under the light of the smoking torches, these regained their feet in an incredible short space of time. Then, to the unutterable astonishment of the Shawnees, it was found that the prisoner had escaped.

The Indians stood completely dumbfounded for a moment, totally unable to realize that such was the case. But a Shawnee Indian rarely gives way to his emotions, and when he does, it does not last long. A long, wild, lengthened howl conveyed the dismal intelligence that the white man had fled.

Now the pursuit and search commenced. Lights were gleaming and flitting through the trees, like frantic fire-flies, and the eager savages were darting and yelling in every direction. Signals were given and returned, and all imaginable artifices adopted.

But a pursuit under such disadvantages could hardly be expected to be successful. And it did not prove so in this case. Jenkins knew well how to use his legs, especially when his life depended upon them; and the manner in which he flew through the forest would have made an ordinary Indian despair at once. He had nearly the entire night before

him, and he hardly halted for breathing-time until morning. The moon arose toward midnight, and so lit up the wood that it would have been exceedingly dangerous for him had his pursuers been anywhere in the vicinity. But they were not, and he had it all to himself.

At morning he was so exhausted that he threw himself upon the ground, at the roots of a fallen tree, and slept heavily. Slept until the middle of the afternoon, and then he would not have awakened had not a visitor helped him to recall his wits. He opened his eyes and started with unbounded astonishment at seeing before him that mysterious being known as the Frontier Angel. She stood a few feet away, surveying him with a look of mild joy, and holding in her right hand a rifle which he instantly recognized as his own.

"So you made your escape, did you?" she remarked, seeing that he said nothing.

"Hello! how are you? Glad to see you. How's your folks? Been well?" asked Jenkins, suddenly thinking he had been remiss in his usual politeness. These questions were accompanied by a profound bow and scrape of his foot upon the earth.

The being before him paid no attention to these demonstrations, but repeated her remark:

"So you made your escape, did you?"

"Very well, I thank you, how's your health?"

"You have escaped, I say?"

"Oh! yes, a pleasant day."

The personage paused and looked at him in astonishment. The truth of the matter was, Jenkins was so confused that he did not comprehend a single remark made by her. He continued bowing and scraping and speaking incoherently until, at last, his senses returned. The Frontier Angel merely gazed at him with a wondering expression in which not a particle of mirth could be seen. Waiting a few moments, she once more repeated her remark.

"Oh—you spoke of escape, did you? Yes, I managed to get away myself."

"Were you not bound?"

"Oh, yes: with tremendous big cords."

"How did you free yourself of them?"

"Broke them all by my giant strength, ma'm," he replied, valiantly.

"You are mistaken, sir."

"Oh! was it you that cut them when we was in the muzz?" he asked, eagerly.

"I cut them and admonished you to fly. You should not take the credit to yourself," mildly replied the visitor.

"I didn't know as you done it, or I wouldn't said so," said Jenkins, somewhat crestfallen at being so caught.

"How came you to be captured?" she continued, standing in front of him, and keeping her dark eyes fixed upon him.

"Overpowered by main force! I'd like to see the man that could withstand forty-three Shawnee Indians."

"Were there that many who assailed you?"

"Well, I couldn't say positively now—perhaps more or less. To speak within bounds, we'll call it forty-two."

"And where is he who was with you?"

"Who?—Dick Dingle? He wouldn't stay and fight, but run and left me behind to meet all the danger."

"You were scouts, then, sent to reconnoiter the Indians, I suppose. In doing so, you were captured by your enemies, while your companion escaped. But, thanks to the great Ruler above, you were also delivered from death. Your friend, from what I know of him, leads me to the belief that he gained enough knowledge of the Indians to answer all purposes. And he will be able to give all information to the settlements which I was unable to give."

"S'pect so. Leastways I know, when I get home, I'll be able to give our settlement a great deal of information that they never knowed or dreamt on before."

"I have followed your trail, my friend, to come up with you and find out what I have just learned. I rejoice to learn that it has turned out thus. And now I will bid you good-by. Do not delay, for although you are a great way from the Indian town, there may be many and swift pursuers upon your trail."

"Say! hold on a minute!" called out Jenkins, springing toward her, first reaching out his hand, and then suddenly withdrawing it, as he remembered what he had heard said would be the consequences of such an act.

"What do you want?" she asked, turning round and facing him.

Now, the truth of the matter was, Jenkins had fallen desperately in love with this singular personage. And, all things considered, it could not be wondered at. Arrayed in her fantastic Indian dress, her beauty was certainly wild and wonderful. Gay, painted eagle and porcupine quills, formed a fiery head-dress, which contrasted well with the long, luxuriant hair of jetty blackness, that rolled unrestrained down her shoulders. The face was small and a delicate oval, the eyelashes long and black, the nose thin and small, and the teeth of pearly pureness. Viewed from the side, the profile was perfectly straight from the upper part of the forehead to the base of the nose, from which point it slightly retreated to the chin. The eyes were dark, and when fixed upon a person, wore a meek, mild expression; at other times they fairly blazed with fire. A dress of dazzling colors reached from the shoulders to the ankles, and was confined at the waist by a band of gleaming red. The feet were incased in small, ornamented moccasins, which displayed the symmetrical limbs to advantage. Several rows of wampum were hung around the neck and waist, and the whole dress was such as an Indian chief would put upon his princess.

When she turned so abruptly and faced Jenkins,

he was considerably disconcerted. Upon any other occasion, he would have hesitated and stammered much, before he would have come to the point; but, he well knew there were but a few minutes left him, and he said:

"I just want to speak a word with you. I s'pose you know Dick Dingle, don't you? that feller that left me so cowardly?"

"Yes," she replied, without changing a feature or removing her gaze from him.

"Well, I was just going to say—that is—I wouldn't have anything to do with him. He is an awful mean man; I wouldn't speak to him."

"Why?" was the same quiet question.

"Oh! 'cause he's so everlastingly mean. Darnation! haven't I told you a thousand times? How many more times are you going to ask me?"

"Is that all?"

"Yes—no—hold on!"

"What else do you wish?"

"I want to know—if—if—you don't like him, do you now?" suddenly broke forth Jenkins.

The maiden began acting strangely. Her eyes brightened, her lips quivered, and she seemed striving to say something. She controlled her emotion, in a moment, and sweeping her hand over her eyes, looked calmly at her questioner, but without deigning a reply.

"Don't you—don't you—don't you love me now? I do you!" besought our friend, going down on his knees, in true sentimental style.

The Frontier Angel gazed calmly on him a moment, then raised her eyes, turned on her heel, and disappeared in the forest.

CHAPTER IX.

PETER JENKINS—A COUPLE OF SPEECHES.

"CONSAERN her, I don't care nothin' for her. I was just fooling; I only got down to see where she had put my rifle. Wonder where she got it from! She's awful ugly. S'pect Dingle has been telling her some lies about me. By gracious! if I'd only thought about her shooting that arrer at me, she'd have cotched it. Wonder if it would have killed a feller if he'd touched her! I wouldn't risk it, nohow. She is purty—somehow. Never mind, I don't care, though I should like to know who she is. It's time I was tramping home, or the folks will begin to worry about me!"

Soliloquizing thus, Jenkins took his rifle, which he saw was still loaded, and once more turned his face homeward. Let us precede his arrival at the settlement.

Dingle, upon starting, after he deemed it useless to wait for Jenkins, had made all haste through the wood and proceeded much faster than the war-party which started next day. Nothing occurred to interrupt his journey, and in due time he made his appearance before the block-house. He was joyfully welcomed back by all. The fate of Jenkins was sincerely regretted by every one. He was known to all, and although from his suspected cowardice he commanded little respect, his loss was none the less mourned.

"They're paintin' and greasin' themselves, so that they can slip around easy like, and they're just ready to start ag'in' some settlement. More than that, boys, they've started afore now, and their faces are turned this way and you've jest got time to get ready to invite 'em in."

"How many?" inquired the commander of the post.

"Can't tell, but a powerful heap. Howsumever, there ain't more than we can give 'Hail Columbia.' I don't think there'll be any Shawnees except from the upper town on Mad river. The imps in the other towns have got enough other deviltry to attend to, and I s'pect this is a kinder independent affair for the Piqua skunks."

The news of Dingle, as might be expected, occasioned the greatest excitement throughout the little settlement. The settlers, with compressed and silent lips, commenced moving the most valuable part of their furniture into the block-house, while the women, "whispering with white lips," moved hurriedly about, uttering their supplications continually.

As for the men in the block-house, they were in the highest of spirits. It had been a long time since any thing had occurred to break the monotony of their life, and they hailed with delight the prospect of storms ahead. When one of the men became so boisterous that the commander endeavored to check him by telling him that the fight would probably be a desperate and bloody one, the fellow sprung off his feet, swung his hat over his head, and shouted, "Glory!"

Peterson had returned the day before Dingle, but without any news to alarm the settlement. The Indians in the Scioto valley were as quiet as usual, and there was no evidence to show that they intended a hostile expedition. The attack, as said by Dingle, and also by the Frontier Angel, was most probably contemplated by those at the Piqua town alone.

After most of the preparations had been completed, Abbot called Dingle aside, and asked him whether he had learned any thing of McGable.

"He wasn't in that village," he replied.

"I suppose you are sure of it?"

"Yes, for I surrounded the village two or three times, and if he'd been thar, I'd seen him. I seen the chief, and could have shot any reds I'd been asked to."

"Peterson says he is not in the towns either, which he visited, for he examined each most thoroughly. How can it be? Where is he?"

"I've found out that he is at the village at the head of the Little Miami most of the time. Thar's where he is now, you may bet a considerable."

"Do you suppose he will be with the attacking Indians?"

"I'raps so, though it can't be told for a sartin

thing. I s'pose you'd like to know when me and Jim are going to catch him. You needn't think we're going to give it up. We ain't, 'cause we've set our hearts on it; and as soon as these reds as ar' comin' here get a little taste of us, the thing's going to be done. 'Cause why? Dick Dingle and Jim Peterson has said so."

"I hope you will learn of the fate of poor Marian, for I believe her mother will not live three months longer if you do not. When she finds out, for certain, that her child is dead, and gone to rest, she may bear up under this great affliction."

"Hold still a minute," said Dingle, as if a sudden thought had struck him. "Now, there's Frontier Angel; she knows all about Injun affairs, and I shouldn't wonder ef she could tell you somethin' about her. Freeze me to death, why didn't I think of it! I know she can."

"Frontier Angel—who is she? I have heard her spoken of as an Indian maiden, of whom nothing is known except that she is one of the best friends the settlers ever had."

"So she is—so she is; ef it hadn't been for her, two or three times, thar would have been some big ha'r raising done by the reds. She finds out nearly all their deviltry, and she's bound to let the whites know it."

"Do you know where she is now?"

"Tellin' the settlements to keep their eyes peeled, or maybe she's gone up to heaven a little while. You needn't laugh, for she's a *spirit*—she's an angel, sure. Lew Wetzel says so, and I know she is, too."

"Why do you suppose she is such a being?"

"She's jest like one. She's as purty and as good. No one knows whar she has come from, or whar she goes to. She is allers alone, and goes about in the night. She ain't afraid of nothin', while every thing is afraid of her."

"How are you going to get, then, the information of which you speak?"

"Just ax her the next time I see her. She knows me, and we've often talked together. She come and told me the other night 'bout the reds comin' down this way, and said I must go up and look 'round."

"Well, Dingle, find out what you can; I've no doubt you will. Perhaps it is time we separated, as there is enough for all to do. Mansfield, I believe, wishes to speak with you. Ah! here he comes."

Mansfield approached. His inquiries at first were the same as Abbot's, and receiving the same answers, he continued:

"How soon, Dingle, do you suppose the attack will be made?"

"To-night, sir."

"So Peterson said, and I suppose you must be right. You have no fears of the result?"

"No, sir; the Shawnees always attack in the night-time. I understand their capers. Ef it wa'n't for Frontier Angel, there would be a hard scratch, for we wouldn't have been fixed up so snug for 'em. I shouldn't wonder if thar wa'n't much fight after all, when they find how things is."

"If they are to attack to-night, they cannot be far off."

"No; they ain't many miles out of the way. It's now 'bout noon. They'll send thar scouts ahead, and when the news reaches them that they are anxiously expected, they'll hurry up and git along afore dark."

"What will be their object in doing that?"

"You'll see; they'll hoot and yell, and make speeches to scare us, and make believe there's a cap of 'em. They'll order us to surrender, or they'll blow us to flinders. You'll l'arn sunkthin', you will. Freeze me to death, if you don't."

The afternoon gradually wore away, and the words of Dingle were found to be true. Vigilant sentinels were watching every point in the wood, and, at last, they discovered several Indians reconnoitering them. Every inhabitant was gathered into the block-house. All the men were fully armed and anxious for the affray. Dingle and Peterson volunteered to enter the wood and spy out the movements and intentions of their enemies; but the commander would not permit it. He believed they could not escape being drawn into ambush, by the outlying scouts. Besides, he could not see what good could result from such an attempt. He peremptorily forbade any man recklessly exposing himself, or to attempt to execute any undertaking without orders.

Near the middle of the afternoon, some six or seven Indians were continually seen, flitting from tree to tree, and approaching the settlement as nigh as they dared. They seemed to make no attempt to conceal themselves, and often boldly exposed themselves upon the edge of the clearing. They viewed the settlement from every point possible for them to reach, and could not avoid the discovery that the whites were abundantly prepared for the assault.

Growing bolder and bolder, at the continued silence within the block-house, one of the Indians strode fearlessly out into the clearing, and stepping upon a large stump, shook his hand in a warning manner toward it. That instant there was the sharp crack of a rifle; the Indian made a hurried jump from the stump, and hobbled away into the wood. As he did so he could not help hearing the loud laugh that greeted his exit.

"Guess he run a splinter in his foot!" remarked Peterson, who had fired the shot.

"Forgot sunkthin', I guess," added Dingle. "Hello the reds have come!"

Others were now visible, and the number increasing, the wood appeared to swarm with them. They passed and repassed, and finally the majority appeared upon the edge of the clearing. Here they remained stationary a moment, and then entered the wood again.

"Heavens! there are five hundred of them!" exclaimed Mansfield, in consternation.

"Git out!" laughed Peterson; "don't you understand that trick? They're showin' themselves half a dozen times over to scare us into knockin' under. That's just 'bout a hundred of 'em, not one more, and they ain't a little scart themselves."

"Who is at the head of them?"

"Do you see that feller standin' off at one end like, kinder hid behind that tree?"

"Yes; but he isn't dressed like a chief."

"Cause he ain't a chief, nohow. Don't you know him?"

"No; I never saw him before."

"I reckon you have. That ar' gentleman is Mr. Thomas McGable, that you've been wantin' to see so long."

At mention of this notorious renegade's name, there was a sensation among the whites. Abbot, Mansfield and others strained to get a view of him through the loop-holes, and expressions of indignation were freely made.

"How nice I could pick him off," whispered Peterson to Mansfield, and he ran his eye along the glistening barrel of his rifle.

"Don't do it—don't do it," admonished our hero. "Remember your promise to Abbot."

"You needn't be afraid; shootin' would be too good for him. He's bound to know what the white men think of him afore he dies."

The marching, filing, and countermarching continued a considerable time, when the commander within the block-house was heard to say:

"Hello! we're going to hear something."

"Just as I s'pected," said Dingle. "McGable's goin' to exhort us."

The renegade made his appearance, holding a white handkerchief suspended on a stick over his head, as a flag of truce. He walked forward, waving the fluttering signal conspicuously, until about half-way between the forest and the block-house, when he mounted one of the stumps which were so numerous about him, and then he made a speech. First, he advised them as a friend to surrender; demonstrated the utter foolishness of hoping to resist such an overwhelming force as he had at his back, and pledged his honor that they should be treated humanely. Warning with his subject, he informed them what a mighty man he was; what he had done, and what he would do, and how all the white men knew better than to resist him. If his summons to surrender were not heeded, he would blow the whole settlement sky high, and tomahawk every man, woman, and child!

After the renegade had finished, he seated himself upon the edge of the stump, and waited for the commander's answer. The latter, without keeping him waiting, stepped boldly out upon the platform, and shouted, in a voice every syllable of which Jenkins, who was several miles away in the forest, afterward averred he distinctly heard:

"Tom McGable! you may attack and be hanged!"

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH THERE IS A FURTHER ACCOUNT OF THE SHAWNEES, THE SPEAKERS, AND JENKINS.

AFTER receiving the summary reply of the commander of the block-house, McGable arose, and without a word walked toward the wood. Here he seemed to spend a short time in consultation with the Indians; for they immediately after separated and disappeared among the trees.

"What does that mean?" asked Mansfield.

"They've drawn off, and will wait till night 'fore they try any of their games," replied Peterson. "We ain't done with 'em yet."

Such seemed to be the impression of all the others who had had any experience in Indian warfare. The Indians were too eager and well prepared to be satisfied with any thing short of an attempt to carry the block-house.

The night set in cold and stormy. The rain poured down in torrents, and the wind hurled it rattling against the block-house. The air, too, was of inky darkness, and the dismal sighing of the forest, the dull, murmuring roar of the Ohio, made the scene gloomy enough to the settlers. Had it not been for the incessant lightning, the time could not have been more favorable for the assault of the Indians. But the sharp, trembling streams of fire played constantly overhead, lighting up the forest and clearing as if at noonday, and the "near crashing of the thunderbolt" seemed to inspire the timid with a sort of valor—a peculiar bravery that they were strangers to at other times.

Dingle, Peterson, and the most experienced Indian-fighters never removed from their stations at the loop-holes during the night. The terrible storm that prevailed was of incalculable benefit to the whites in another particular. It prevented their assailants from using that most dreaded of all agencies—fire, in the assault.

The sentinels mentioned kept a continued watch from all sides of the block-house upon the wood and clearing. They knew too well that the continued silence of their enemies was more dangerous than open demonstration. Some deep-laid plan was hatching which was expected momentarily to develop itself.

Now and then a few syllables were exchanged between those within, but these fragments of conversation only seemed to make the gloom more impressive. No lights were burning, and none could see his neighbor. They had all been assigned stations by the commander, which they did not offer to leave or exchange, while some of the women and younger portion, overcome by watching and the confined air, gave way to their drowsiness and slept reverently and fitfully.

The hours between midnight and morning are the invariable ones selected by the North American Indian for making his attack upon his enemy. This

strange being, so similar to the wild animal in more than one respect, seems to have learned many a lesson from him. Darkness; the stealthy approach and blow; the inevitable yell and leap in death; the howl of rage and disappointment; the chilling war-whoop; the persistent trailing of an enemy; the patient, silent watch; the black passion of revenge; the reveling in blood; all these are passions common to and a part of both.

It was at that hour, just beyond midnight, the most weird and gloomy of all, when a sort of stupor of indifference had fallen upon all except the most experienced, that Dingle gave the intelligence of the Indians having been seen upon the clearing, in the rear of the block-house. Almost at the same instant Peterson added that they were also upon the front. Their course of action was now suspected at once; it was to attack the rear until the attention was concentrated in this direction, when a rush would be made upon the front, and an attempt to scale the palisades.

Every man was now upon the alert. The lightning, as if ordered of Providence, flamed more incessantly, and nearly every step of the approaching savage could be seen. Some twenty were halting just beneath the edge of the wood, and evidently waiting for a moment of darkness in which to make a rush.

"Hyer they come!" said Peterson.

The same instant all saw them half-way across the clearing, and almost immediately a dozen spouts of flame flashed from as many port-holes, and nearly half the Indians leaped wildly in the air and rolled quivering to the ground. The others wavered for a moment and then scattered and took to the wood again.

"Hyer they am now, sartin," called out Dingle.

The real attack was now attempted. Nearly the whole pack, yelling like so many tigers, rushed forward, and came up against the palisades like a hurricane. Here, as their heads appeared, by the aid of the friendly lightning, they were shot down by the cool and deliberate fire of the whites. The fire was incessant as the lightning, and told with frightful effect upon the assailants. But the Shawnees are brave when excited, and they maintained the assault most determinedly. McGable was soon seen several times, and three of the soldiers, as they afterward said, aimed nearly all of their shots at him. But fate seemed to protect him.

As the darkness blazed forth with the living fire, the block-house loomed out clear and defined, standing as it did, like a large, dark, motionless animal brought to bay by his dogged pursuers, and from whose hundred eyes the red bolts of destruction were hurled incessantly and wrathfully.

The Shawnees continued their desperate attempts to scale the palisades, growing more furious and revengeful at their repeated failures. But the steady, continual fire of the whites made dreadful slaughter, and they finally broke and fled in the wildest confusion to the wood. The shots from the block-house continued as long as a single Indian was visible.

"What do they now propose to do?" asked Mansfield.

"To git home 'bout as quick as their legs will allow them."

"Good! Our success has been better than we could have hoped."

"Don't get excited now, 'cause it ain't no ways sartin they've left yet."

"It makes no difference whether they have or not; it is all the same to us. We haven't lost a single man, while they have had twenty killed. They can't make a more vigorous attack than this last one, and they cannot possibly meet with a more complete repulse."

"I tell you that ef it hadn't been for the rain and the lightning we'd have found things considerably summat different. In the first place we wouldn't had the light to shoot by, and in the next, they would 've had some chance to give us a taste of what they had l'arned to do with fire."

"They've gone for home," said Dingle decisively; "they won't bother us again very soon."

So it proved. An hour or two later it began to become gray and misty in the east, the rain ceased falling, and gradually the light of morning stole over the wood and settlement. As the day broke the scene was dismal and cheerless. The appearance of the forest after a cold storm of rain has passed over it, always seems to wear its most disagreeable look. The dripping twigs, the branches loaded overhead with water, every rustle of which brings it down in torrents; the cold, sticky leaves, the wet, shining bark of the trees, and the chilling wind that sighs through the wood, all induce a feeling of desolation and dislike.

Such appeared the forest the morning after the attack. In the clearing the bare, charred stumps seemed blacker than usual, and the beautiful river was now turbulent and muddy. Not a sign of the savages was seen. They had disappeared, carrying with them their dead and wounded; and the only vestiges of the conflict were numerous red spots in the clayey earth which the storm had not completely washed away.

Before it was light, Dingle and Peterson entered the wood to ascertain whether the Shawnees had really fled or not. They now made their appearance with the intelligence that they were not in the neighborhood, and there was no further cause for fear. The settlers, thankful and joyous, poured out of the block-house, carrying back their furniture and valuables, and by noon the settlement wore its usual appearance again.

One of the sentinels reported to the commander about this time, that there was still an Indian in the wood, apparently bent upon mischief.

"Draw bead and shoot him the first chance you get," was the reply.

With this determination, the sentinel betook himself to watching again. He was the only person acting in that capacity at this time, the commander deeming the assurance of Dingle and Peterson weighty enough to allow his men a good half-day's rest.

Occasional glimpses of the supposed savage could be obtained; but it was a long time before the sentinel could bring his rifle to bear upon him. He dodged and flitted so rapidly that it seemed impossible; but becoming impatient and provoked, the sentinel at last raised his gun, took a quick aim at what he supposed to be his head, and blazed away.

"Consarn your old pacter, who you shooting at?" called out the indignant Jenkins, as he stepped into the clearing.

The sentinel dropped his gun in amazement, and stared all agape at the speaker as he recognized him. Jenkins supposing his silence the result of fear, suddenly became valiant and again demanded:

"Say, who you shooting at? S'pose you'd have hit me. Smart, ain't you. You needn't look so innocent and drop that gun, and pretend you didn't do it. I seen you take aim and shoot, and I'll pay you for it, danged if I don't!"

By this time Peterson and several others appeared on the platform, and understanding how matters stood, their laughter was loud and continued. Jenkins indeed presented a comical and curious appearance. Naturally thin and bony, he now seemed doubly elongated, from the fact that his clothes were completely saturated, and clung tightly to his limbs. As he straddled indignantly forward, they flapped together, and it would have been no great stretch of imagination to suppose him a post gliding over the ground.

"Can't you answer? Who you shooting at?"

"Why at you, of course," replied the commander, striving vainly to restrain his gravity. Jenkins was heard to give a loud "Umph!" and seen to shake his hand in a warning manner, when he was admitted into the gate and strode hurriedly toward the fort. The sentinel, who had gained his senses by this time, enjoyed the fun as much as the others, and determined to carry the joke through. He made no reply for the very purpose of giving Jenkins the idea he was sorely frightened at his mistake.

The indignant Jenkins soon made his appearance upon the platform, and observing the cowering sentinel shrinking behind the others, called out:

"You're the man, yes, sir! Come out here, and get half killed!"

"That's right, Jenkins, give it to him. He'll l'arn better than to fire at you ag'in," said Dingle, with an appearance of just indignation.

"Go in, long-legs, and hammer him," repeated the others.

"Yes! come out here and take it, you old coward, you!" shouted Jenkins, stepping around and rubbing his fore-arms as though he were rolling up his sleeves. "Come out here, I tell you!"

The men now pushed the trembling man from behind them, and retreated so as to leave the two in an open space and facing each other. The sentinel now put off all semblance of fear, and demanded in a gruff tone:

"What do you want?"

"Why, I want you to stand still while I half hammer you to death!"

"Hammer away, but if your head isn't cracked before five minutes, I'll stand treat, boys."

The astonishment shown by Jenkins at this unexpected change was ludicrous in the extreme. His hands suddenly unclenched, and he stammered out:

"What—what did you say?"

"Why, come on and fight," replied the sentinel, blustering as vigorously as did Jenkins at first.

"You shot at me, didn't you?"

"Yes; and I will do it again, too."

"I don't think it was the right thing. I wouldn't do it to you."

"Because you are afraid."

"No—I don't think I would."

"Well, what of it?"

"I s'pose you didn't do it on purpose, and I won't say anything about it this time. But you mustn't do it again."

"Yes, I will, if I want to! I shot at you, and am sorry I didn't hit you. Come, I thought you was going to whip me."

"Yes, Jenkins, give it to him. You said you were going to," cried the others.

"I don't s'pose he done it on purpose," he replied, turning toward the others.

"Yes I did. I told you so, and would as lief do it again as not."

"Jeusalem! here I'm standing in my wet clothes and catching cold every minute. This'll never do."

And in spite of the jeers and laughs of the others, Jenkins, with an anxious look, hurried away "to change his clothes."

CHAPTER XI.

A PRIZE GAINED AT LAST.

JENKINS, as it afterward turned out, was in the wood reconnoitering the fort when the shot was fired which had well-nigh been so fatal to him. His object in doing this was to find out, before venturing to show himself, whether the Shawnees or whites held possession of the settlement. He had made the discovery of the attack when but a few miles off, and hearing the guns and becoming alarmed for his own safety, he ascended a tree and remained there until every Indian had departed from the neighborhood.

Some time after the closing scene of the last chapter, the sentinel confessed to Jenkins that he mistook him for an Indian when he fired, and he begged forgiveness for his great mistake. It is needless to say that the pardon was freely granted, and good humor held reign among them all.

The day after the attack and repulse, Dick Dingle

for the first time in his life, was taken sick. He was not dangerously so, but so severely, that he was compelled to remain within doors. This happened unfortunately for Peterson, for the two had determined to pursue the retreating Indians for the purpose of capturing the renegade. A short consultation was held, when Peterson announced that he should make the attempt himself, accompanied only by Mansfield, who was all eagerness to join him.

Accordingly at noon the two passed out of the gate and commenced the expedition by plunging into the forest. The trail of the retreating Shawnees was so recent that it had not been obliterated by the rain, and it was easily followed. It led up the river a couple of miles, when it crossed to the Kentucky shore and took a north-west direction directly toward Mad river.

Our friends had not proceeded far when Peterson assured Mansfield that they were gaining rapidly upon the savages. The latter, incumbered by their dead and wounded, were making their way very slowly through the wood, and evidently had no thoughts of pursuit. An hour or two later Peterson remarked:

"We're goin' too fast, Mansfield; we'll run our heads into some trap afore we know it. Let's set down awhile."

The two seated themselves upon a fallen tree and engaged in conversation.

"If we don't stop we'll be up with them afore night," said Peterson.

"And why shouldn't we?"

"Because—'sh! there's some one back of us now." Before they either had time to conceal themselves, the bushes parted, and the mysterious Frontier Angel stood before them.

"What are you doing here?" she asked, quietly.

"Looking for that renegade," replied Mansfield.

"Do you know how far the Shawnees are away?"

"Can't be very fur, I think," replied Peterson.

"They are encamped a half-mile from here, and have sent scouts back upon their trail to see who pursues. If you remain here twenty minutes longer you will be seen and shot."

"Whew! that's more than we bargained for," remarked Peterson; "if it's all the same, we'll decline at present and slide."

"Do you know any thing of McGable?"

Our hero stopped, for she had disappeared as quickly and quietly as she came.

"I don't want to wait hyer—reds is about," admonished Peterson.

No time was lost by our two friends in seeking safety. The trail of the retreating body was so broad and palpable that there was little fear of their pursuit being noticed. The scouts sent back would take the direction of the back trail, and keep alongside of it to ascertain whether any force was following them. If so, an effort would be made to draw them in ambush. They had no suspicion, and cared nothing for such pursuit as was really made.

Peterson and Mansfield proceeded in a direction at right angles with the main travel, for several hundred yards, where they secreted themselves. Here they remained for over an hour. By this time it was well toward night, and they ventured forth to resume the Shawnee trail again. After reaching it, they followed it a considerable distance, when finding that the Indian camp could be but a short distance away, they halted and again made off in a side direction.

It was while doing this, and when several hundred feet from it, that Peterson, who was slightly in advance, suddenly halted and raised his hand over his head as a signal for Mansfield to remain quiet. Both stood motionless a moment, when Peterson took several stealthy steps forward and motioned for Mansfield to come to his side. The latter did so, his looks showing more than words the curiosity he felt. The ranger, by way of reply, pointed ahead, and downward. Mansfield followed the direction of his finger, and he felt every nerve thrill within him as he saw, a few feet in advance, the extended and sleeping form of the renegade, McGable.

"We've got him at last!" whispered Peterson, exultingly.

The man, from all appearances, had lain down to rest a short distance from the camp, to escape the hubbub and confusion occasioned by the presence of so many wounded and dying. That he was entirely unsuspecting of personal danger was evident from this fact.

Mansfield was too excited and fearful of awakening him to even whisper or suggest anything to Peterson. The latter coolly and deliberately stepped forward and removed the rifle from the nerveless embrace of McGable; then, stooping gently, pulled his knives from his girdle. This done, Peterson cocked his own gun, and holding it pointed toward the breast of the renegade, said:

"Now wake him, Mansfield—give him a kick on the shins, and don't be afraid of hurting him."

Our hero gave him a gentle touch with his foot, which, failing to have effect, he increased to a kick. Seeing him make a movement as though awakening, he stepped back as directed. The renegade, mumbling to himself, finally opened his eyes, and stared bewilderingly about him, seemingly totally unable to comprehend his whereabouts.

"Mr. Thomas McGable, Esq., I believe," said Peterson, with much gravity, without removing the aim of his rifle.

"Who are you?" demanded the renegade.

"Your master, sir."

"We'll see about that. Where—"

He paused as he reached for his rifle and found it gone; and his astonishment turned to furious indignation when he discovered that his knives had also been removed.

"What in the name of the furies are you doing with my arms?"

"Jest sot 'em on one side for fear you might hurt yourself."

"See here, I understand your game, but it won't do. You think I'm your prisoner, eh? Did you know there is a hundred Shawnees within calling distance, who'd cut you to pieces ef they knowed you war here? Now, if you don't hand me my gun and knives back, they'll do it. I'll call 'em, and then you may whistle for your hair."

Peterson's face grew as dark as a thunder-cloud, and his eyes fairly scintillated with fierceness.

"Tom McGable," said he, in a voice as deep and rumbling as the distant thunder, "we come after you. You've got to go back to the settlement with us, and it don't matter whether you're dead or alive! I've sworn that I'll bring you back with me, and ef I thought it would be any trouble to drive you thar, I'd shoot you through your black heart this minute, grab you by the neck and drag you along. You can holler to the Shawnees, but it would never do you any good; you'd neve live to see 'em. Ef I hadn't made a promise, I'd knife you this minute. Tom McGable, you may take yer choice; you can either git up and walk along jist as we tell you, without making the least noise, or you can set still and be shot on the ground there. It don't make a bit of difference to me, but one or t'other has got to be done. I'll give you four seconds and a half to decide in. Ef you ain't started by that time, I'll shoot, by thunder!"

During the utterance of these words, the renegade manifested a curious compound of emotions. First, indignation and blustering bravado were depicted upon his snaky face; this gave way to doubt and hesitation, and when the last expletive fell from Peterson's lips, he was the embodiment of trembling, craven-hearted fear.

"What—what will you do with me?" he asked, tremblingly.

"Kill you, like as not."

"What do you want me for?"

"Come, you going to start? Your time's up."

Pale as death and muttering a fearful curse, the renegade arose to his feet and faltered that he was ready.

"Trot along then, and we'll foller."

"Which way you going? This way?" he asked, turning his face in the direction of the Indian camp.

"I ruther guess not at present. Turn round t'other way 'zactly, don't turn your head, or try to come any of your dodges, for the minute you do, you'll be stuck."

McGable wheeled around in the direction indicated, and started forward, our two friends following him closely. It was now quite dark, and the gloom in the wood was intense. There was no moon, and the sky was still cloudy and obscured. When the darkness became so great, Peterson took the renegade by one arm, Mansfield by the other, and the trio thus proceeded.

After walking an hour or so, the renegade, probably finding there was no immediate personal danger, regained in some degree his courage and ventured to speak.

"I'd like to ask you a question. No 'bjection I s'pose?"

"Not as long as you're respectful to your 'speriors," replied the ranger.

"Wal, then, how come you to find me?"

"We looked for ye."

"I s'pose, but you didn't s'peck I was such a cussed fool to go off in the woods to sleep, did you? Leastways, I didn't s'pect I was myself."

"No; it was kinder accident that we found you."

"S'pose so. How was it you was so well fixed at the block-house for us? How did you find out we were coming?"

Peterson reflected a moment before replying to this question. He was in doubt whether a disclosure would not be dangerous to the Frontier Angel. He asked Mansfield's advice upon it, and the two fell behind and debated it in an undertone for a few moments. They came to the same conclusion, that, as McGable was already condemned to death, and there seemed no possibility of his escape, there could be no harm in letting him know the truth. This decided, they stepped forward, took him by the arms, and the ranger replied, or rather asked:

"S'posed we tell you; what of it?"

"Oh, nothin', only I thought I'd like to know before I died. There's a gal that's called the Frontier Angel, that I've had my 'spicion of. I've told the Shawnees of it, but she acts so good, they won't believe it. Didn't she have nothing to do with telling you?"

"Yes, she told us."

"So I thought. It's lucky the Injins won't believe it."

"Now I wish to ask you a question," said Mansfield.

"Wal, what is it?"

"Who is Frontier Angel?"

The renegade maintained silence for several minutes till our hero repeated, in a louder tone:

"Who is the person they call Frontier Angel? Do you know?"

"Yes, but I can not tell you."

"Why not? I am sure it can do no harm."

"Pr'aps not, but I can't tell you. Let that be the answer."

"I am not willing that it shall be. I insist that you tell or give some reason for not doing so."

"I'll give you the reason, then. I know who she is, but have sworn ne'er to tell a white, and I swear ag'in I never will. There's one thing, howsumever, I'll tell you without the axing. The gal they call the Frontier Angel is crazy!"

Mansfield started. "What made her crazy?" he asked.

"Don't ax me, fur I can't tell you any more."

"She ain't white, is she?" demanded Peterson. "Won't hurt yer, I guess, ef you let us know that much."

"I won't tell you no more, so you can both dry up."

The journey was now continued without a word being spoken by any. The renegade seemed sullen and moody and maintained silence. His remarks had set both Peterson and Mansfield to thinking. It was not the first time they had both puzzled themselves thus. Who could the singular Frontier Angel be? was the all-absorbing question. She was crazy! That accounted for the reverence and awe in which she was held by the Indians. And yet her manner had never awakened the remotest suspicion that such was the case among the whites with whom she had come in contact. That accounted for the temerity with which she executed the holy object of her life—that of befriending the whites in peril.

Despite the improbability of the case, Mansfield could not avoid the thought that she was a white person. He could form no possible reason for thus thinking, and yet the thought would present itself. At last he imparted his singular idea to Peterson. The latter dissipated it at once by telling him that such could not be the case. Dingle, who knew as much, if not more of her than any of the rangers, assured him that he had noticed her features and face to satisfy himself, as he entertained and had heard so many doubts expressed about it. She had the black eyes and hair of the Indian, although the prominent cheek-bones and several other characteristics of the race were wanting.

But the skin showed unmistakably that she belonged to the aborigines.

"But where has she obtained that perfect knowledge of the English tongue that she evinced in her conversation?"

"Dick can't answer that, but hyer's as thinks that goes to show she's a spirit, sure, 'cause if she ain't what else can she be?"

This set Mansfield's thoughts in another direction. A darker picture presented itself. The refusal of McGable to answer his question added life to the picture, and our hero became satisfied that he had now struck the truth.

"Isn't she your wife, Tom McGable?" he asked, bending his mouth close to the ear of the renegade.

The latter started as if stung by a serpent, trembled and breathed hard for a moment, but made no answer. Mansfield repeated his question in a more peremptory tone, but it was of no avail; the renegade had resolutely sealed his lips.

This, together with his manner, demonstrated the certainty to Mansfield, that the Frontier Angel had been or was now the Indian wife of McGable. She had married him, he believed, when she dreamt not what a black heart she was taking to her bosom. Goaded by his cruelty, and the subsequent knowledge of his awful crimes against his own race, her reason had become dethroned. And the safety of the people that was the object of her eternal hatred to her husband, now became the burden of her life. The change from the natural aversion which she, as an Indian, felt to the whites, to that of friendship and love for them, he believed was due to the unbounded horror created in her mind by the atrocities of McGable. It was one of those singular phenomena which the human mind often presents. Mansfield, previous to this, had felt some slight degree of compassion for their captive, but it was all gone now. The man, tho' independent of the last-named crime, could bring himself to forswear and massacre his own kindred, without a shadow of provocation upon their part, he felt deserved any death that the ingenuity of man could invent.

The march of the three was continued all through the night, and the halt in the morning was of but a few minutes' duration, as Peterson felt fearful of pursuit in case the absence of the renegade was discovered. A short time after the settlement was in sight, and before twenty minutes more had passed Tom McGable, the notorious renegade, was ushered within the palisades by our two friends.

The astonishment and rejoicing created by his capture were unbounded. He was taken at once to the block-house and placed in the upper story, from which it was impossible for him to escape. There had been quite a heavy reward offered for his apprehension, and the commander assured Peterson and Mansfield that as soon as it could be secured they should have it. The latter, however, refused to receive any portion, as he had rendered no assistance worthy of mention in the capture of the prisoner.

The excitement became so great among the settlers that the commander, to quiet them, gave out that the garrison would determine what should be done with McGable at once. Abbot, hearing this, requested the commander that he might be allowed, as a great favor, to see the prisoner alone for a short time. The peculiar circumstances of the stricken father being known, this request was granted; and McGable, under charge of Dingle—who asserted that he had been cured by his capture—and the officious Jenkins, was conducted to Abbot's house. There being but one door by which the lower story could be entered, the guards remained outside, and Abbot found himself face to face with the man who had so well-nigh killed his entire family at one blow. Mrs. Abbot, not wishing to be present at such an interview, had purposely absented herself, and the two, the murderer and the murdered, were almost alone. Abbot gave the renegade a seat, then sat himself in front of him, where he could look directly into his face.

"I have petitioned that I might see you alone, McGable," commenced Abbot, in a low, quiet tone, "in order that I might ask you something, which, perhaps, you suspect. God knows that I have no de-

sire to revenge myself upon you. Only grant me this privilege, and I will forgive you, McGable, for the awful crime you have committed. Last spring I sent Marian upon a flat-boat, expecting to rejoin her in this settlement a few months later. Instead of reaching her destination, the boat was decoyed and all on board murdered, with the exception of Peterson, who effected his escape. He left Marian dying, he believed, upon the boat as he sprung away. Had he left her dead, this interview would not have been sought by me. But there has been a doubt ever since in the mind of her mother and myself, of the manner in which she died—for we do not pretend to hope that she survived. This doubt has so troubled us, that I have tried all means of solving it. You must know the circumstances, McGable, and now a broken-hearted father appeals to you to give this knowledge, and set his trouble forever at rest."

While Abbot was uttering these words, the renegade sat like a demon incarnate, his eyes blazing with the most baleful passion. His teeth were set and he drew his breath hard and gaspingly through them. He controlled this whirlwind of fury in a measure, before Abbot had finished, and when he spoke it was in the low, frightful voice of suppressed passion.

"Richard Abbot, your daughter refused me, and I swore I would be revenged. I joined the Shawnees as Simon Girty and others did, but I kept watch upon your settlement. I found out that you were going to send her to this settlement in company with others. Then I calculated the time had come and was only sorry that you wasn't there, that you could have been tomahawked, too! I found out when the boat started, and it was dogged till it reached the right spot, when we came down upon it. Don't ax me no more. I've had my revenge, and that's enough."

The stricken-hearted man sat as pale and silent as death while these burning words were being uttered. It was not his emotions alone that made him thus, but the mighty struggle it took to control them.

"Will you not tell me?" he asked, in a voice of wailing agony, that would have melted the heart of humanity.

"No; I'll tell you nothing!" fairly shouted McGable.

Such a sudden dizziness came over Abbot at this point, that, for fear of fainting, he arose and hurried into the room which occupied the same floor, and which connected with the one in which he had been sitting. He hoped to return in a moment, and was so bewildered and overcome that he only thought of being alone until he could regain his self-command. It is said the Evil One himself sometimes helps his favorites. Whether such is the case we are not prepared to say; but what now took place is enough to make us skeptical, to say the least.

Most singularly it happened that just before Abbot withdrew, Dingle felt a sudden return of his sickness of the morning. It was so violent that his iron will could not resist it, and he staggered away for the same purpose of being alone; for, if our readers have noticed it, it is almost invariably the case that when a man, unaccustomed to sickness, is suddenly taken, his first wish is to be alone with himself. He felt that perfect recklessness which is apt to come over us at such times, in regard to temporal matters, and had Dingle been admonished at this particular moment of his imprudence, his probable reply would have been that McGable might go to perdition for all he cared. Thus it happened that the terrible renegade was left with no guard at all except Jenkins.

Even then it might not have happened so unfortunately had not the last named individual taken it into his head to ascertain how matters were progressing inside. Being left without the companionship of Dingle, it was perfectly natural that he should take this means of passing away time.

"Hello! inside there, you, how you getting along?" he called out, poking his head in at the door. Receiving no reply, he shoved his head further in, and then made the discovery that the renegade was standing alone in the middle of the floor. "Hello! all alone, eh? what you thinking about? Your sins, I s'pose. Shouldn't wonder now if you did feel sorter down in the mouth."

"What do you want?" gruffly demanded McGable.

"Oh, nothing in particular. Dick has just gone off to see the doctor to get some medicine to take for the gripes he has just got, and I thought I'd look in to pass away time till he comes back."

"Where is he?" asked the man, quickly, vainly striving to conceal his agitation.

"Just off here, a little ways. If you want to see him, I'll call him."

"Never mind."

"I s'pose now—Umph!"

The last exclamation of Jenkins was perfectly involuntary, and caused by receiving a terrific blow from the foot of the renegade, directly in the stomach, which doubled him up like a jack-knife. As he gasped and rolled over upon the grass, McGable shot over his head like an arrow, and bounded away for the palisades. Nearly all the men were at the block-house, debating upon his fate, but several descried the flying fugitive, and shouted the alarm. An instant after he scaled the palisades and Peterson and several other rangers sped across the clearing in pursuit. Dingle, who had nearly recovered, raised a regular war-whoop and joined in the chase.

Late at night, several of the pursuers returned, moody and sullen with their ill-success. In the morning, another made his appearance with the intelligence that Dingle and Peterson were still in rapid pursuit, but there was little hope of overtaking the renegade, as he possessed a wonderful fleetness of foot, and in all probability had given them the slip during the night.

So it proved. Some time after, the two rangers

returned and confirmed this suspicion. They had not even caught a glimpse of him after he crossed the clearing and entered the wood.

CHAPTER XII.

A MINGLING OF FEAR, DOUBT, AND HOPE.

THE indignation at McGable's escape could scarcely be repressed; but the version given by Jenkins so completely exculpated himself from blame, that he escaped entirely the shafts of indignation. There were some, it is true, who had their private opinion of this wonderful story; but, as there was no witness to disprove it, these opinions were unexpressed.

Jenkins affirmed that what first induced him to peep into the room was a strong smell of brimstone. Upon looking in, he saw McGable sitting astride of the devil, who was walking slowly toward the open door, holding a trident in one claw. Jenkins informed him that he was very sorry to oppose him, but, nevertheless, he felt compelled by the stern dictates of duty to prevent his passage. At that, the father of all evil made a rush toward him, striking him in the breast with the trident, and grappling with him. They closed in with each other, and the struggle became fearful. Jenkins, securing the trident, used it as a "whip of scorpions," and was satisfied he gave some "strange horrors" with it. He believed he would have eventually triumphed, had he not been taken with one of his fainting fits at the critical moment. Victory thus secured, the arch-enemy galloped over his prostrate form, vanished in mid-air, and left McGable skimming over the ground toward the sheltering wood.

More than one placed implicit faith in this story. Such is the superstition of the bravest of the brave—the border ranger!

But there was one thing which troubled the settlement more than the escape of the renegade, it was the fate of the Frontier Angel. There was no fear of what the Indians would do, for it was well known that a crazy or foolish person is regarded among them as one specially gifted by Manitou, and under no consideration will they venture to harm him; but it could hardly be expected that McGable would share in this superstition; and, now that his suspicions of the friendship of this being to the whites was resolved into an absolute certainty, some plan, it was rightly thought by the settlers, would be taken by him to close her lips forever. It was well known that there was no crime against the human race too great for the scoundrel to commit; and the weak, defenseless Frontier Angel, through the stupidity of the whites, would fall a victim to his vengeance.

"Freeze me to death, ef it shall be so," exclaimed Dingle, who was discussing the subject with Peterson, the commander, and several others. "No, sir; ef that sperit is killed, her blood will be upon us."

"If she is a spirit, she can not be harmed by mortals," ventured Abbot.

"Wal, Tom McGable ain't a mortal; he's an infernal imp."

"Whoever this strange being is, that you term Frontier Angel," remarked the commander, "it is evident to all that she is the firm friend of the whites. The timely warnings which she has so repeatedly given us, and, in fact, all the settlements along the Ohio, entitle her to their everlasting gratitude. If she is slain by McGable, as Dingle observes, her blood will be as much upon us. For it was ourselves who first told him she was our friend, and then allowed him to escape to do what he pleased with her. No, friends, it will never do. Some plan must be taken to warn her of her peril and afford her all the protection she will receive. Have you any plan?"

"Kill that renegade and then the matter will be set at rest," replied Peterson.

"That is easier said than done," remarked Mansfield. "If I may be allowed to give an opinion it is this: now that McGable has been convinced of our deadly enmity to him, and our anxiety to secure him, he will take particular care never to give us an opportunity. It will be only in battle where he will be likely to feel our will in regard to him. This Frontier Angel is still roaming through the forest, engaged in her truly angelic work of befriending the whites; and the plan that I propose is this: Let all the settlements which it is known she visits be notified of the whole circumstances, and instructed to warn her upon the first opportunity; and, besides this, let us all try to induce her to abandon the life she is leading, and to settle down and remain with us."

"Yes, do; tell her I'll marry her if she will," said Jenkins, all eager seriousness.

"There, that will do," interrupted the commander. "The plan proposed by Mansfield strikes me as being the best, and I am in favor of adopting it at once."

"It's my opine it's the real thing," said Peterson. "It's the ticket, and hyer's as moves we stop talkin' and go to workin'."

A short time longer was spent in consultation, when the following course was decided upon: Peterson was to go up the Ohio, and state the case at the different settlements, all the time seeking an interview with her, while Dingle and Mansfield were to range the vicinity of the Indian towns in the hope of meeting her.

This plan, with characteristic vigor, was acted upon at once, and in the afternoon of the day succeeding the escape of McGable, the three men were in the forest, seeking out the Frontier Angel. Dingle and Mansfield, as said, took a north-west direction, toward the Shawnee towns, which they reached in due time. They remained in the neighborhood several days, and during that time gained one or two glimpses of McGable, but could see nothing of the being for whose benefit they came. At last they were satisfied she was not in them, and must either be in the Scioto valley, or engaged upon some errand

of mercy or—had she already fallen a victim to revenge?

Some time after, Dingle and our hero were in the Scioto valley, carefully reconnoitering the Indian villages, but obtained no further information, and were reluctantly compelled to the belief that she was either at the eastern settlements, or she had already been murdered by McGable. The latter, as Mansfield remarked, took such care of his person, that there was little hope of again obtaining possession of it. Several days were spent in the neighborhood, without further success, when they turned their faces homeward, convinced that they had done all that it was possible for them to do in this direction, although that all was nothing.

They reached the settlement and reported themselves, and then all waited anxiously for the return of Peterson. Before going out all knew the wishes of Abbot, and it was expected that something definite would be gained of the fate of poor Marian.

It was a week before Peterson came in; but when he did come, he had a report to give that thrilled every heart in the settlement. At the first village he reached, he was told the Frontier Angel had left there that morning, and that her manner was so wild and strange as to induce the settlers to use everything except force to retain her. From her rambling, incoherent manner, and several remarks she made, they gathered that her life had already been attempted by McGable, and that the memory and thoughts of it made her act so singularly.

From this settlement, he went on to the next, but she had not been seen here for several weeks. Having been instructed to visit all the frontier villages, Peterson did so, but learned nothing more of her. From this he supposed that, if not in the Shawnee towns, she could be at no great distance from the settlement first mentioned. Accordingly, he spent several days searching the woods and streams in the hope of obtaining some trace of her. He failed to find her, but was discovered himself by her.

He had lain down one afternoon, to rest himself, and was just falling into a doze, when he was startled to his feet by her suddenly appearing before him.

"Are you looking for me?" she asked.

"Yes; but confound it, how did you know it?"

"Do you, too, seek my life?" she asked, gazing at him with the most painful anguish and terror depicted in her face.

"No; I wouldn't hurt you for ten hundred thousand million pounds in British money. I'm looking for you to tell you, you must keep your eyes peeled 'cause there's sunkthin' in the wind."

There was a wildness in her look, which, despite himself, made Peterson restless and ill at ease, although he took occasion to show by his words and manner that he had no such thoughts. The girl stared at him a moment, and then asked:

"You do not want to kill me, then, do you?"

"No; I wouldn't do no such thing, and would raise the ha'r of the man that tried it, if he was my own brother."

"He tried to; he shot at me, and chased me with his knife."

"Who did so?"

"That bad man; he is hunting now for me, and wants to kill me."

"Who do you mean? McGable?"

"Yes, it was he—he nearly killed me."

"He may kill you yet. Won't you go with me where he can't hurt you?"

"Oh, no—no—I live alone. God will take care of me."

She turned to depart, and Peterson, who all the time had felt fidgety and nervous, was glad to be alone, when it suddenly occurred to him there were several questions which he must yet ask, to gain the desired information for Abbot and Mansfield. So he called her back.

"Say, will you let me ax you a thing or two?"

She answered by turning around and silently facing him.

"You know McGable in course, and must know he's the all-firedest villain that tramps. Wal, last spring he and a lot of Shawnees attacked a flat-boat, and sliced 'em all up 'cepting the best-looking one of the lot—him as is squatted afore you. Wal, that ain't much to do with the matter, 'cept to illustrate the point. There was a gal on board, that I tried to jump overboard with, but she got shot just as I was ready, and I left her behind. She wa'n't dead then, but about so. Howsumever, her folks never 'll be satisfied till they know all about it. Might be you've heard of the gal?"

"No," replied the Frontier Angel, shaking her head with a pensive, saddened look.

"Spect you did. Sorry, 'cause I'd like to find out. Never heard McGable say nothin' 'bout her?"

"No."

"Qu'ar. Oh! is that renegade your husband?"

The maiden simply gave him a wondering stare without making a further reply. Now that Peterson was fairly started, he determined to learn all he could of her.

"The name of the gal was Marian Abbot," observed the ranger, suddenly recollecting that he had not mentioned her name. As he uttered it, his heart fairly stopped beating, at the manner of the mysterious being before him. She started, her dark eyes opening so strangely, and her breath coming so short and gaspingly, that Peterson averred he felt his hair lift his coon-skin cap clean from his head.

"Marian Abbot—Marian Abbot—Marian," she repeated, as if communing with herself, and gazing not at Peterson, but over his head, far away into the horizon where the purple and golden clouds were then blazing with the fire of heaven.

"Yes, that was her name," said Peterson, anxiously.

"Marian Abbot—Marian Abbot," she still repeated, drawing her hand over her forehead as if engaged in intense thought. "Have I heard of her, you ask? Have I heard of Marian Abbot?—no—yes—let me see—I remember. I saw her—no, I know nothing of her!" she replied, dropping her hands from her forehead, and looking up at him with the same wild, fiery look.

"Think ag'in," urged Peterson, much disappointed at her manner. "You jest now said you remembered her. Put your thinkin'-cap on and p'raps you'll find out arter all."

"No; I can't remember any thing. Don't ask me to, for it hurts my head so much. Wait a moment"—she said, pressing her hand quickly to her temple again. "Marian Abbot—yes, there was such a girl—I remember her—I saw her among the Indians!"

At this point she turned deadly pale, and sunk to the earth. That singularly foolish notion, that it was fatal to touch the Frontier Angel, prevented Peterson from springing forward to her assistance. She did not faint, however, but instantly recovered herself and bounded away in the wood without uttering another syllable.

This information, conveyed in substance to the breathless listeners by the ranger, thrilled every one, as we said, to the heart. It awakened, both in the father and Mansfield, a strange hope, that, from its very intensity, produced a deadly heart-sickness. Abbot reeled to his home, where, for a long time, he strove to control his agitation. He said nothing to his wife, for he was nearly unmanned, and feared he should turn crazy himself.

"Oh, merciful father! can my daughter be alive? Did she escape that awful massacre? Is this a dream? Am I going mad? Oh, grant that no hope may be awakened to be dashed from me again!"

Mansfield was equally excited. The cold sweat came upon his face, and it seemed as if his heart stood still, and could never recover its power. It is difficult to conceive of a keener torment—a more excruciating agony than that which is produced by the awakening—the sudden bringing to life of a long-buried hope. The extremes of joy and pain are the same, but the culminating point of the latter is reached, when doubt—almost and yet not quite uncertainty—is a part of the former. It is impossible for a human being to quietly bear it. Relief must be found in some direction, or the sufferer's reason will flee.

The painful affliction of Abbot and his wife was known to the entire settlement, and they had the heartfelt sympathy of every one. It was believed by all that the wife was dying of a broken heart. She was silent and remained at home, seeking the society of no one. She had become pale and fearfully emaciated, seeming resigned and anxious for the death that was so fast approaching. Her only desire was to rejoin her sainted child, where no murderer's hand could ever separate them.

After the father had, in some degree, regained command of himself, he passed out of the house again, without speaking to his wife, and made his way back to where a knot of the settlers were discussing the all-absorbing question. Here he found, with painful joy—for those two words express exactly his emotion—that the belief was quite general that Marian might possibly be alive and a prisoner among the Indians.

"I tell you it won't be the fust time such a thing has happened," remarked Dingle, impressively; "there's no tellin' what capers them Shawnees are up to. In course, there's a powerful heap of chances that the gal has gone under, but hyer's as thinks it ain't always onpossible that the gal is kickin' yet. Now, Jim Peterson, tell the truth for once: is you sartain that gal died when you dropped her on the boat? Mind, you're on your oath."

"No, by the Eternal, I don't know she is dead, though I'll swear to it, on the Bible, this minute."

"Wal, sir, hyer's as is goin' to the Shawnee towns and findin' out whether that gal is livin'."

"But," persisted Abbot, who seemed determined to receive no false basis for his hope, "how can she be there? Have you not been to all the towns, and had an opportunity of judgin'? You certainly would have heard of her before th's time."

"No; I don't know as I would. Them Shawnees ar' all the time up to such tricks that no one can begin to keep track of 'em. Freeze me, and Lord bless you, man, I don't want to make you think I am going to find your gal for you and then have her dead all the time. You must be ready for disappointment."

"I am ready for anything, I trust," faintly replied Abbot, who felt that he could not survive such a cruel dashing of the cup of hope from his lips.

CHAPTER XIII.

DARK.

THE excitement in relation to the Frontier Angel and he lost Marian was greatly increased by two circumstances that occurred on the day following the return of Peterson. It had been determined, as the reader has already learned, by Dingle, that he should start to the Shawnee towns in search of tidings of Marian. In this dangerous undertaking it was agreed that Peterson should join him. The latter having undergone considerable toil and fatigue, was compelled to remain over night, by the commander, in order to be prepared for what was before him.

Shortly after the sun had risen, and while the two scouts were preparing to start upon their expedition, the sentinel on the platform of the block-house reported an Indian canoe visible, far up the Ohio. The scouts, including Abbot, Mansfield, Jenkins, and

several others, instantly ascended the platform to view the suspicious object. It was at a great distance—so great that it resembled a duck, or something similar, slowly swimming the river. It was not crossing, as first supposed, but coming downstream, and would, if it continued, pass by the settlement.

"Hello!" exclaimed Dingle, "there comes another one right behind it. What does that mean? Looks qu'ar, I declar'."

Our friends continued gazing at the two canoes now visible with an intense interest. The last one had just rounded a bend in the river, and followed in the wake of the first. Whether it was in pursuit or not was impossible to tell at the great distance; but, if so, their progress was so similar, that they seemed like moving automata, connected with each other under the water, and propelled by the same power. They kept the center of the current, in a direct line with each other, and moved steadily and rapidly, as could be easily seen even at the distance they were away. They did not swerve a foot from a straight line, so seemingly anxious were they to hurry forward.

"Can't you make anything of it?" asked Mansfield.

"I can see their paddles shinin' in the water," replied Dingle, "and—I think—" he added, speaking slowly, with his eyes fixed upon the canoes—"I think—yes—I know there is only one in the first boat and there is—yes, two in the last. It is a race, sure as thunder!" he exclaimed, standing and looking around upon the others.

"Perhaps only a friendly one, between a couple of Indian canoes," suggested Abbot.

"We don't have such races on the 'Ho this time of year," replied the ranger, with a quiet smile.

All continued watching the canoes, until it was evident that one person was pursued by a couple, and that the race was a most determined one upon both sides.

"Freeze me to death!" suddenly exclaimed Peterson, "if that person in the first canoe ain't Frontier Angel, then shoot me!"

"That's so," added Dingle, "and the one as is chasin' of her is our old friend, Mr. McGable and an Injin!"

Several, as said, had entertained suspicions that the mysterious Frontier Angel was in the first canoe, but not one save Dingle had any idea that it could be the notorious renegade in pursuit. Even as it was, the commander of the post refused to believe that the miscreant would venture so soon within sight of the block-house.

"It's him," continued the ranger, with complete assurance. "I never was mistaken 'bout him, you can bet a powerful heap on that."

"If so, are you going to see our best friend captured?" said the commander, in a tone of severe rebuke.

"She ain't agwine to be captured," coolly replied Dingle. "I guess McGable and his Shawnee will have to take a few instructions in pulling a canoe afore they'll stand a chance to catch the Frontier Angel."

"Can he not shoot her?" asked the commander, more sternly than before. "Dingle, you and Peterson hurry into the wood to her assistance, for she will need it. Shoot that McGable, and I will give each of you twenty pounds apiece, besides reporting you to the general."

"He can shoot," said Dingle to himself. "Come, boys, let's hurry. We orter started long ago, and we might 've stood some chance. He can kill her now if he takes a notion afore we can draw bead on him."

The two, accompanied by Mansfield, hurried to the gate, were permitted to pass out, and away they sped across the clearing, into the wood.

In the mean time, those upon the platform were watching the canoe with intense and painful interest.

"The old rapsallion is gainin' on the beautiful angel," remarked Jenkins, excitedly. "Oh, if I was only where I could get my grasp on that feller's throat, I'd choke him to death in five seconds! Oh! oh! oh! wouldn't I?"

"No; I do not think he has gained at all upon her," remarked Abbot. "At any rate, the race can not be continued much longer, for they will soon be nigh enough to run into danger. If we could only hit them with the swivel," he added, looking toward the commander.

The latter shook his head.

"The swivel is only to be used in cases of great emergency. We did not use it when the Shawnees made the night attack, because we could get along without its aid. Besides, it is not loaded with a single ball, but filled with slugs, bullets, and bits of iron, so as to do as much destruction as possible upon an enemy nigh at hand. No; the firing of the swivel, however well aimed, could effect no good purpose."

"I wonder at the presumption and daring of McGable," said Abbot, turning his gaze once more up the river. "They say he only differs from Simon Girty in point of cowardice. His heart is as black, but his face is often white with fear. But this looks like bravery, to see him venture so nigh this spot which he knows is so dangerous to him."

"He won't come much nigher. I only hope that Dingle will get him within range. It is all folly to undertake to capture him. If we should secure him, he would manage to get off again through the help of that fool of a Jenkins."

The commander did not notice that the individual he referred to stood directly behind, and was gazing, completely dumbfounded, at him. Had he known it, he would not have cared, for the thought of that foolish escape of the renegade was ever a source of irritation to him, and he took no pains to conceal his

opinion of Jenkins's cowardice. But this was the first time the latter had heard him speak thus, and, as said, he was astonished in no small degree.

"Why, didn't I tell you how it was? How the Old Boy carried him off, and I fought like blazes to stop him, but happened to have one of my fainting fits just then? Think you'd believe a feller when he tells the truth."

"I do," dryly rejoined the commander.

"I tell you," said Abbot, excitedly, "if McGable comes much further he will surely run against Dingle's bullet. He is so eager he does not seem to notice where he is running to. Look how that Shawnee pulls!"

"And they are gaining upon her, as sure as the world! She is wearied and well-nigh tired out. Heavens! it is too much to stand here and witness that," exclaimed the commander, half beside himself. "Why, in the name of heaven, don't Dingle shoot him? He would have been nigh enough if he had only walked. I can not comprehend it!"

"Look! McGable is going to shoot!"

"It can not be—yes."

At that instant, a bright flash was seen to flame out in the front of the rear canoe, a thin wreath of smoke curled upward, and a moment after, the faint report of the renegade's rifle was heard.

"Is she hit? Curse it, where is Dingle?" exclaimed the commander, fidgeting and moving about as though unable to contain himself.

"She is wounded, but not killed. See! she is coming in to shore!"

The canoe of the Frontier Angel was now hurrying in toward the Kentucky shore, swiftly followed by that of the renegade. She had approached so nigh as to be hidden to the view of those in the block-house, but was still at a considerable distance. It was at this moment, that the Indian accompanying McGable dropped his oars, rose to his feet and had the gun already at his shoulder, when two simultaneous reports were heard, and he threw his arms wildly over his head and sprang headlong into the river, upsetting the canoe at the same time. McGable, who was a most excellent swimmer, dove deep and came up a long way from the canoe, whose bottom formed a black spot on the surface. His head hardly appeared before it sunk again, and Dingle and Peterson really believed he was drowning. But it was only a feint of the wary wretch. His head was descried still further down-stream, when it finally disappeared altogether. But, after a while he was seen to rise too far away to be within rifle-range, and walk away in the forest.

The reason of his escaping all the shots of the whites was this. In the hurry of departure, Mansfield had never once thought of taking his rifle with him, so that there was really but two shots. Dingle and Peterson had hurried to their utmost, notwithstanding the remark of the commander, who was not so situated as to rightly judge of duration. Upon coming in view, they both raised their guns together and took aim at the form of the renegade. That instant the savage rose and aimed at the Frontier Angel. His immediate death could only save her; there was no time for consultation, so that one might accomplish this. The danger was too imminent, and naturally enough, they both fired together. The canoe instantly upset and the skillful manner in which the renegade effected his own escape has already been shown.

Our three friends remained watching for his reappearance, until it was made at a great distance downstream. This, of course, was a considerable time after the shooting of the Indian, and during the interval their attention had never once been directed to the Frontier Angel. Now, as they turned to look for her, she was nowhere to be seen. Remembering the point toward which she was hastening, they searched along the shore, and, at last, found her canoe, pulled high up on the bank and secreted beneath the bushes, but there were no signs of her. A careful examination of the canoe and the ground around, failed to show the least sign of blood, so that they were compelled to the joyful belief that she had escaped the shot of McGable without being even wounded.

How this could be the two rangers were at a loss to tell, for the renegade was so close at hand, and the object was so well presented, that even an ordinary marksman could scarcely have failed.

"That settles the matter," said Dingle, compressing his lips and shaking his head; "that's the second time he's tried to kill her and couldn't do it. I s'pose some will say she ain't a *spirit* now—but you needn't tell Dick Dingle so."

"Nor Jim Peterson," added that individual himself.

"There ain't even a trail of her, and she ain't nowhere about hyer—she's gone up, she has. You might shoot at her all day, and not hurt her. Hyer's as don't undertake any such foolery as to warn her—'cause why? thar ain't no need of it. She ain't in danger, and never was or will be."

"Wonder why she don't kill that devil, McGable?" remarked Peterson, leaning on his rifle and gazing meditatively down the river.

"She'll give it to him *awful* fore he gets through—see ef she don't. His time ain't come yet."

Some further time was spent in similar remarks, when the three set out for the block-house. It was the intention of Dingle and Peterson to start for the Shawnee towns, but the commander instructed them to remain over till the next morning, when, if nothing unusual happened, they would be allowed to pursue their journey. The rangers were not very unwilling to do this, as the sky gave appearance of another storm, and the adventure with McGable had its effect upon them.

The morrow came, but the rangers went not, and it was ordered that they never should again.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ATTACK IN THE WOOD.

storm which threatened during the afternoon toward night and raged until morning. It fell, but the wind was terrific, as it howled at the settlement and screamed through the forest. What rain fell came almost horizontally, and rattled like hail-stones against the cabins.

All night long the dim, yellow light burned in the block-house, and the shadowy form of a shivering sentinel was never absent from the platform. It was such a night as to make one relish the comforts of a shelter. Chilly, windy, and dismal without, it was all light and sunshine within. A huge fire of hickory logs was roaring in the fire-place, lighting up the bronzed faces of the hunters and rangers without the aid of the torch that smoked further back in the room. Now and then the men were furnished with drinks of whisky, and their spirits were light and jovial. Dingle and Peterson were there, relating and listening to stories as usual, and "all went merry as a marriage bell."

Little apprehension of an attack was felt, as the late repulse had taught the Indians a lesson which they could not but heed. The shivering sentinel paced his walk, slowly and gloomily, while the keen wind whistled around his ears. As he heard the merry laugh of those within, he breathed more than one earnest prayer that the time would hurry by and bring a relief to take his place. He could not be said to keep a very vigilant watch, as the darkness was so intense as to prevent; and when the windy rain was hurled in his face, he felt more like covering it up with his great cloak than in peering toward the hoarse, soughing wilderness. He had first whistled a tune, then hummed it, and was now counting his steps, to pass away the time. He had calculated the number of turns he should be compelled to make before his watch would be up, and was now noting by this means the minutes as they slipped away.

His watch extended from nine o'clock until midnight. About half of it had transpired, and he was completely absorbed in enumerating his steps, when he was brought to a sudden stand-still, and felt a thrilling chill creep over him, as a voice, faint and suppressed, but yet distinct and clear, called out from the direction of the clearing:

"Hello, there!"

The sentinel stopped abruptly and looked in the direction from which the voice came. Once, it seemed, the outlines of a man were discernible, but it was only an illusion. He reflected that it might be an artifice, and hesitated before replying. "It's like enough he wants to find out where I stand, and then blaze away. However, I'll fix it so that I can answer him."

Leaning himself as much as possible behind the protection of the platform, he called out:

"What's wanting out there?"

"Admittance; I am half-frozen to death. Will you let me in?"

"You must wait till morning, my dear sir."

"But I will perish. Have you a man in the fort named Jim Peterson?"

"Yes; what of it?"

"Call him; he will admit me if you will not."

"I don't know about that. Who are you?"

"Tell him Madison Drake wishes to see him."

The sentinel was too wary to leave his post. He suspected that this was a stratagem of the man to attack the gates; and yet he reflected, that if he was innocent of any evil design, it was not right that he should be denied shelter. The commander had given imperative orders that no one should unfasten the gates after nightfall. So the sentinel adopted an artifice. He answered that he would call Peterson, and, at the same moment, opened and closed the door. But he shut himself upon the outside, and remained a few moments listening. Hearing nothing, he concluded it was no risk to call the ranger. Accordingly he partly opened the door, put his head in quickly, and said, in a loud tone:

"Peterson, there is a man named Madison Drake out here who wants to see you."

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of Peterson it could not have startled him more. He was in the midst of a story, all life and animation, when the gruff words of the sentinel broke in so abruptly upon him. And yet it was not the words alone, but the name pronounced that so affected him, for Jim Peterson would have taken his solemn oath that that man was killed months before. He was sure of it, and what could the sentinel mean by breaking in upon them with such intelligence? He looked around upon the faces all turned expectantly toward him, waiting for the remainder of his story. He believed he must have been mistaken.

"What did that feller say?" he asked, looking half-ashamed at asking the question.

"He said there was a man named Drake who wanted to see you. What makes you look so scared, Jim? I hope you don't owe him any thing."

"Wal, by the Eternal, that gits my time. Ef that man's alive, then I'll sw'ar that men don't die nowadays 'less they want to."

"Why, what's up now?" asked Dingle.

"Don't you remember that name?" asked Peterson, turning toward our hero.

"I was just thinking I had heard it somewhere."

"Wal, sir, he was on the flat-boat with me when all was killed 'cepting me. Yes, sir."

Peterson shook his head meaningly and slapped his hand upon his knee as he uttered these words.

"Like enough it's him," said Dingle. "Freeze me to death, if you can tell what's goin' to happen nowadays."

"It may be a decoy of McGable's," added the commander. "It is unnecessary to caution you, Peterson. Nevertheless, I will accompany you."

The two went out on the platform. The wind was

so strong as to nearly lift them off their feet, and the darkness so great that they barely discerned the form of the sentinel beside them.

"Where is he?" asked the commander.

"He will speak in a minute."

They listened, and finally the suffering man called out:

"Hello there, sentinel; hain't Peterson come out yet?"

"Yes, here I am; what do you want?" replied and asked the ranger.

"Don't you know me, Peterson? Don't you remember Madison Drake, who was on the flat-boat with you?"

"Yes; but the one I knowed was killed that night. Be you him?"

"I am he. I was not killed, although well-nigh so. But, if you will not admit me, I will not live long, as I am nearly perished now."

"Have patience, Drake, a few minutes, and I will see about it."

"Do you believe he is not trying to deceive us?" asked the commander, in a low tone.

"That's his voice—I'd swear to it 'mong ten thousand. But I'll swear, too, that he has been killed once!"

"Fudge! Jim, you ain't such a fool as that? Go down and let him in, if you ain't afraid. Remember what I said and be careful."

The ranger, without a word, turned and made his way downward. He had no fear of any thing mortal, but he would have rather faced a dozen yelling Shawnees than the ghostly apparition which he believed was waiting for him upon the outside.

"Where'n thunder ar' you?" he demanded, spitefully, as he approached the gate.

"Here, just on the outside, half chilled to death," was the reply from the rattling teeth of the sufferer.

"Sure there ain't no reds about as ar' goin' to try to dodge in atween your legs?"

"No, no; and in heaven's name, how much longer are you going to keep me here?"

"Wal, you needn't be so cross 'bout it."

With these words, Peterson cautiously unbarred the gate, and opened a small space. Instantly, a cold, wet, skeleton-apparition glided through and stood trembling beside him.

"How are you, Jim? You don't appear glad to see me," it said, pushing a cold, bony hand toward him.

"Just wait—wait till I fasten this gate and then I'll go up to the block-house with you," replied the ranger, working at the massive bolts, and at the same time, glancing furtively over his shoulder, at what he believed to be a veritable ghost beside him.

"Now, give us your hand, Jim, for, if ever a white man was glad to see another, I am glad to see you; Jeh-u-u-u! ain't it cold?" exclaimed the apparition, desperately, as a regular spasmodic shock shook him, and apparently ejected the words in a most unceremonious hurry from his rattling teeth. Peterson could not refuse the proffered hand; but, as he took it, he felt a cold chill crawl from the finger ends of the ghost, up through his arms, clean to the crown of his head, where it seemed to halt, gathering in a big mass, and then separating into a number of arrowy needles, shoot through every part of his system, even contracting his very toes.

"How—how'r yer?—'tis cold—let's go in," he said, turning toward the block-house.

We should like to know whether any of our readers have been in a situation, where their greatest desire has been to get ahead as fast as possible, and yet they felt ashamed to either look behind them, or to increase their gait. If they have, they can appreciate the peculiar sensations of the really brave-hearted Peterson. Imagine yourself, on a dark night, when within a few rods of your door, where you know your friends are peering into the darkness in expectation of your momentary arrival—we say imagine that just at that moment, you hear a foot-fall behind you! You start and your heart commences to throb, and you hastily debate whether it is best to walk unconcernedly along, as though such a thing as fear never entered your head, or to glance behind you, and break into a regular run for the door. But ridicule, more potent than fear, prevents you, and you walk, it is true, a little faster, but as you push open the door, you can not help shoving yourself in rather hurriedly, as your friends judge.

It was with feelings somewhat similar to these, that Peterson walked toward the block-house, his unwelcome visitor stalking after him.

"Hyer we is," he exclaimed, as he ushered him into the warm, glowing room of the block-house.

"A dismal night, gentlemen," said Drake, bowing to the men, and approaching the fire, against which he turned his back, and gazed composedly at the men. "A reg'lar snorter this night is; thought I'd freeze to death. Jehu-u-u! that fire feels good. But I can't blame you for your tardiness and suspicion in such times as these. Though Mad Anthony has taught the Indians manners, it seems that they forget them once in a while."

The hunters were not men to sit silent and unsocial when a stranger claimed their hospitality. They saw it was no ghost, but a veritable flesh and blood human being who stood before them. He was a tall, cadaverous-looking man, his face all hair and eyes, and yet his voice showed him to be a good-natured gentleman. His garments were soaked with water, which slowly dropped from his ragged shirt, and every turn of his clothes, and steamed constantly from them on account of his proximity to the fire. He was without weapons of any kind. Without waiting as long as it has taken us to introduce this description, the commander replied:

"A cold and dismal night indeed. Let me give you something to warm you within, for it is plain you need it."

"Thank you," replied Drake, taking the proffered cup of raw whisky and swallowing it. "No more, thank you. I feel considerably better now."

"Why, Drake, that is you," suddenly exclaimed Peterson; "give us your hand and tell us how you are getting along."

"Ha! ha! has it taken you all this time to discover my identity? I thought you acted strangely when you admitted me into the gate."

"I own up, Mat, I took you for a spook, and it goes hard yet to think as how it is you standin' thar lookin' so jolly, when the last I see'd of you, you had knocked under. Come, you've got warmed up a little, let's hear how it was."

"Well, I will."

And thereupon, the new-comer related his experience, which may be summed up briefly, as follows:

This Madison Drake, as the reader has probably suspected, was one of the number on the flat-boat, whose sad fate was related at the commencement of this work. When the Shawnees made their rush upon it, he, with all the rest, was too bewildered to offer the slightest resistance. He remembered seeing Peterson spring overboard, and attempted to follow him, but he was not soon enough to escape a terrible blow from an Indian's tomahawk. As he descended into the water, his wound rendered him perfectly crazy, and, without knowing it, he swam in to the Ohio shore. Here he was immediately seized by several savages, who made no attempt to offer him further injury. After the massacre was completed, the Indians assembled upon the bank, and the others then noticed his presence. But, instead of killing him, a strange whim possessed them to spare his life. He was too frightened to utter a complaint about the horrible wound in his back, as he knew it would be relieved only by death. They traveled all night and most of the next day without halting. After a time, they reached the Shawnee town in the Scioto valley, where he had remained a prisoner until the day before. An opportunity had then offered of escaping, which he instantly seized. He knew the location of the settlement and made all haste toward it, where, as shown, he effected his arrival.

All listened breathlessly to this recital. Before he had fairly finished, Peterson asked:

"Are you the only one, 'ceptin' me, that got off?"

"I am the only one."

"Are you sure? Did you ever hear of Marian?"

"I am sure I am the only person the Indians took from that boat."

"But I followed them that night and part of the next day, and I didn't see nothin' of you, and you might see nothin' of her."

"Our party, just after starting, separated and did not reunite until just before we reached the Shawnee towns. You followed the wrong one. You might easily have done this, as both parties were large. No; do not hope; had Marian or any one besides us escaped, I could not have helped knowing it."

"That settles the matter, then," said the commander; "we will tell Abbot in the morning. Poor man! I pity him and his wife."

"Is he here?" asked Drake. "I do pity him then; it was a hard blow for him."

"But I have heard," continued the commander, who saw that Mansfield was painfully affected, "that there was a female captive among them."

"Yes, there was one; but she was captured from a settler on the Virginia frontier. Poor creature! she died long ago from her sufferings. But, friends, you will excuse me I trust. I have had a hard run for freedom; and if you have no objections, I will now turn in for the night."

"Certainly; let me help you to another snifter, to make you sleep soundly."

Drake did not refuse the offered drink. As it was now late, the sentinel was called in, another sent to take his place, and those within stretched themselves out upon the floor, where, wrapped in their blankets, they were soon oblivious to external things.

All excepting Mansfield, who sat listening to the howling wind without, and gazing into the glowing embers with feelings which we shall not attempt to describe.

When the morning broke, the slumberers were astir. The storm cleared off toward daybreak, and the sun came out bright and cold. Mansfield, who had not slept one moment, arose and took himself toward Abbot's house with a heavy, painful heart. Deeming that it would be a relief to his wife to hear his intelligence, he introduced it before them both, stating what Drake had said and that there could now be no room for further hope. It would be presumptuous, they all felt, to entertain the slightest hope that Marian could still be living.

"I have cherished no hope of again seeing her on earth," said the mother. "I thank my Heavenly Father that I am satisfied now that she was killed outright. I have nothing now to do but to wait until He calls me to rejoin her."

"Let us go patiently at work, dear wife," said Abbot. "It is a relief to know that she was killed at once. It was a bitter cup for us to drink, but we have swallowed the bitterest portion. I thank God for this intelligence. And you, Russel, is this a relief to you?"

"Yes," he faintly answered, turning his head away.

And so the hope which had been exhumed and fanned into a feeble life died again and was now reburied.

The expedition of search by the rangers for Marian of course was now given up. It was still their determination to capture McGable, but the attempt was reluctantly deferred until a few months later, when it was rightly judged the caution of the renegade would be worn off, and an opportunity would present itself.

It was decided by a number of settlers to spend

most of the time in the wood, felling trees. It was necessary to collect a large quantity of fuel—besides it was in contemplation to erect one or two cabins. This was one of the duties devolving upon the settlement which was always dangerous, and yet one that must be done sooner or later.

So, a company of men numbering over a dozen, including Abbot, Mansfield and Peterson, passed through the gate, across the clearing, each bearing a rifle and an ax. It was quite early in the forenoon; therefore they calculated upon doing a good day's work.

The spot selected for their operations was three or four hundred yards from the clearing. Here they stacked their rifles and scattered themselves in such a manner, that the weapons would be safe from the reach of any foe, and commenced their labors right merrily. The clear ring of their axes, the fall of the trees like a rumble of thunder, and the shout and song, could be heard at the block-house and settlement.

They wrought vigorously until noon, when they ceased, and seating themselves upon the fallen trees, partook of the lunch they had brought with them. They sat close together, joking and laughing, their faces all aglow with good-humor and exercise. The meal was finished, and several of the men had risen to recommence their labors, when a crashing in the underbrush was heard, and the next moment the Frontier Angel burst in upon them, her arms outstretched, her hair flying, her eyes agleam, and her whole appearance that of a raving lunatic.

"Quick! quick!" she exclaimed; "fly! he is coming! he is coming with a lot of Indians! No—you can't reach the fort—they are on that side of you! Take your guns quick! they are going to kill you all!"

Hardly were her words finished before each man had seized his rifle, and stood waiting the orders of some one of their number.

"Get down between these two trees—I hear their tread!" commanded Mansfield, whose ears, quickened to supernatural strength, distinctly caught their tramp through the forest. "Hurry, boys, they're here!"

At the same instant he bounded over the fallen tree beside him, followed by all of the men, when, in a twinkling, they were so disposed that nothing but their heads and rifle-barrels were visible. Then, as they looked for the foe, they saw with horror that the Frontier Angel was still standing as if transfixed, upon the same spot where she had uttered her warning.

"Fly, for God's sake!" exclaimed Mansfield, springing to his feet, and excitedly waving his hand toward her. "Fly, for your life, Frontier Angel! There they come!"

As he spoke she turned to flee, and, at the same moment, the sharp crack of a rifle was heard. She gave a scream, swung her arms wildly over her head, and staggered further into the wood, where she was concealed from view. The woodman had no time to follow her, for immediately there was heard a rushing, and, as the bushes parted, near a score of Indians, led by McGable, bounded into the opening. As they caught sight of the settlers, they poured a deadly volley in upon them, whose fearful effect was told by more than one yell of agony.

"Now charge, boys!" exclaimed Mansfield, springing over the log and dashing straight at the yelling savages. There was an electric power in his words that thrilled every heart, and they charged with such enthusiasm after their gallant leader, that it was irresistible. The Indians were unprepared for any such movement. When high enough to touch them with their gun-muzzles, every rifle of the whites was discharged, and then swung over their heads.

"At them!" shouted Mansfield; "don't spare one!"

The rifles came down with murderous force, and, for a few moments, one of the fiercest hand-to-hand contests raged. But the number of whites, after their discharge, was fully equal to the savages, and their fury could not be withstood. The Indians, in a short time, broke and scattered in the woods, and the panting whites suddenly gazed into each other's faces as they saw there was no foe left to encounter.

"Have they fled?" asked Mansfield, in astonishment.

"Not one is left—all killed or fled! Any of us slain?"

"Yes; I heard some one groan when we started." The whites turned back to the logs where they had first sheltered themselves; here they found two of their number dead, both having received a bullet through the brain, while several others had been given severe cuts.

A moment after, a dozen more men arrived from the block-house. They had heard the firing in the wood, and had been instantly dispatched by the commander; but their help was not needed, as not a foe was left, so signal had been the repulse. But for the timely warning of the Frontier Angel, a most fearful massacre must have taken place. Several of the settlers picked up the two dead men and carried them to the settlement, as the commander had instructed them to return the minute they could. Mansfield, Peterson, Dingle, and Jenkins (the latter having come with the reinforcements) remained behind. Four Shawnees lay doubled up in death, while a fifth was rolling, and clutching, and flinging the leaves in his agony. Shortly, to the relief of all, death put him out of his misery.

"Who was killed?" asked Peterson.

"Smith and Thompson," replied Mansfield.

"Both single men; it is good for them that they have no women or children to mourn 'em. We've straightened out five of them, besides hacking a few more. By gracious, isn't that McGable hyer? Ef I didn't hit him, then I'll never shoot ag'in," asked Peterson.

"He appears to have escaped. What is to be done with these dead Indians?"

"Why, leave 'em hyer for the varmint, after we raises their ha'r."

"In Heaven's name, Peterson, you are not going to do that?"

"I reckons I is. Eh, Dick?"

"In course, we must have their top-knots," replied Dingle, producing his hunting-knife.

"You are as much a savage as they are," said Mansfield, turning his back upon the sickening scene.

The two rangers were not to be deterred from scalping the Indians, although they had enough respect for the feelings of Mansfield, to go through the disgusting operation without their usual remarks and braggadocio.

"They'd 've been glad to 've done that same thing for us," said Peterson.

"Freeze me," said Dingle, "if I don't believe thar is more of 'em round hyer. S'posen we take a look? Jenkins, look through the bushes thar by you."

All, including Mansfield, now commenced searching the wood to see if any of their number had crawled away to die in secret. Jenkins had beat about but a few minutes, when he exclaimed:

"Come here, quick! thar's somebody under this bush! Just hear him groan!"

All hastened thither; and, as Dingle pulled aside the bush, the white, ghastly face of the renegade McGable was seen turned toward them.

"I thought I'd give you your last sickness," said Peterson, with a shocking want of feeling.

"Oh! let me alone, I'm dying!" wailed the miserable wretch.

All feelings except pity left the heart of Mansfield, as he saw the poor man in his last moments. He hastily ran back, and, seizing an ax, cut away the bushes around him, so that the air could reach him. It was then seen that he had received the bullet of Peterson in his side. He was leaning upon his elbow, spitting blood, while his hands closed rigidly over the wound, and the blood oozed through them and pattered upon the leaves beneath.

"Can I do anything for you?" asked Mansfield, kneeling down beside him and opening his hunting-shirt.

"Oh, no! I can't live long. I deserve to die, but I don't want to. I thought—"

He paused as the blood in his throat choked him. Peterson and Dingle were both touched by his misery, and silently withdrew, followed shortly by Jenkins. Mansfield saw that he was alone, and determined to do his duty to the dying man.

"McGable, you are dying, it is true. Put away now all thoughts of this world, and turn your heart toward the hereafter. Your sins are great, but there is a God whose mercy is sufficient for everything."

"Do not talk of God and mercy to me," said the man, with a look so full of horror that Mansfield shuddered to his very soul. "The day of mercy has passed with me. A thousand years could not atone for the crimes I have committed. If you can forgive me, Mansfield—"

"I forgive you all, and so does Abbot—fear nothing of that."

"I have harmed you and him more than you have dreamed. Oh! this wound! Can you not stay the flow?"

McGable removed his hand as he spoke, and before Mansfield could stanch it, such a quantity of blood issued, that the miserable man fainted. The forgiving man bandaged it as well as he was able, and presently the sufferer revived.

"I have harmed you more than you suspect," he said, faintly, turning his dark eyes, all woe and misery, to him.

"You have not. What do you mean?"

"Marian!"

"How?—what?—McGable, you will not refuse me now?"

"Mansfield, in a few minutes, you will have seen a monster die. Let me adjure you to remember it to your last breath. The pain of my wound is nothing to what I suffer in spirit. The awful torment is unutterable—"

"But what of Marian?" gently reminded Mansfield.

"Marian is—" muttered the man, dropping his head back on Mansfield's arm and gasping for breath. "*Marian was not killed on the flat-boat that night!*"

"What do you say?" fairly shrieked our hero, believing that his mind was wandering.

"*Marian was not killed that night—but I killed her! I see her angel face now!—Oh! is this death?*"

McGable was dead!

CHAPTER XV.

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL."

As the death-rattle was heard in McGable's throat, Mansfield felt his head fall back upon his arm. He looked down and saw that all was over. Laying his head gently back upon the leaves, he straightened his limbs, and arose and looked around for his companions. Peterson and Jenkins approached.

"It is all over," said our hero, sadly. "Poor man! he has paid dearly for his sins. I pray Heaven I may never witness another such a death! Have you found any other bodies?"

"We have not looked; Dingle is searching."

"Let us look further. We will return this afternoon and bury McGable. Ah! here comes Dingle! What can be the matter with him, he looks so flustered?"

The ranger approached them, pale and agitated.

"Boys, the FRONTIER ANGEL SITS OUT YONDER ON A LOG, AND SHE IS DYIN'!"

Without a word, Mansfield dashed toward the point indicated.

That personage, known as the Frontier Angel in these pages, was sitting upon one of the trees felled by the choppers, her hand pressed to her forehead, while blood could be seen dropping from her face upon one of her moccasins, which was clotted and stained with it. She did not look up as our friends approached, and Mansfield paused before her and asked:

"Are you hurt much?"

"Oh! I feel wretched—"

Mansfield sprang forward and caught her head as she fainted. The sight made even the hardy rangers shudder. A rough wound was seen at the temple, from which a great amount of blood had issued. Her dark, waving hair hung loose around her shoulders, while her half-closed eyes gave an unearthly terror to her countenance.

"Quick! water! she has fainted!" exclaimed Mansfield.

Peterson sprang away, and in an instant returned with a jug of water which had been brought by the woodmen in the morning for their use. Mansfield sprinkled some in her face, and in a moment she revived. Dingle, with ready wit, had prepared a bandage by tearing his hunting-shirt to shreds, and this was carefully bound over her forehead.

"She must be taken to the block-house at once. Bear a hand, friends," said Mansfield to the two rangers who were looking on. That absurd fear made them hesitate for a moment; but, as if ashamed of their weakness, they sprang forward and made amends by sustaining her entire weight themselves.

"Run ahead, Jenkins, and notify the commander of this," said Mansfield, "and see that no crowd is in our way."

Jenkins darted away, and the three moved carefully through the wood toward the clearing. An occasional moan from their burden was the only sign of life she gave. Not a word was spoken by the three, as they made their way forward. The rangers hardly dared to look down upon the form their arms sustained, but gazed anxiously toward the block-house, evidently in fear of a curious multitude of people. The commander with praiseworthy foresight, had unbarred the gates, and prepared the block-house for her reception. Though nearly struck dumb with Jenkins's intelligence, he did not allow it to interfere with his duty. He briefly informed those gathered around what had happened, and besought them to retire and leave the way clear for him. So, when Mansfield and the rangers brought their charge, there were only one or two to receive them.

"Is it a bad wound?" he asked, as he closed the doors of the block-house behind him.

"I fear so; you will have to take charge of her."

"Place her on the litter, and remain with me a moment."

The commander of the fort was the physician of the settlement. After the sufferer had been placed in the lower room of the block-house, he desired all to depart, so that he might be left alone with her. His determination was to make an examination of her wound at once. He saw that she was hurt only in the corner of the forehead, where it seemed was a slight fracture of the bone.

As he approached the bed, the Frontier Angel sprang to her feet and screamed for him to keep away. He did his best to pacify her, but she became more frantic each moment, until he desisted out of fear of the consequences. After a time she seated herself upon the bed, and speaking in a soothing manner, he gently approached her again. But she was wilder than before, and he retreated at once. From her actions, she seemed to imagine him to be the renegade McGable, and no words upon his part could change the impression.

The good physician sat awhile in a dilemma. He saw it was imperatively necessary that her wound should be attended to, and it was impossible for him to do this alone. After debating a moment, he called in Mansfield and Peterson.

The latter entered, and the sufferer meekly submitted at once. Mansfield took her gently but firmly by one arm, and the ranger held the other. The physician then stepped forward, and with a simple instrument, examined the wound. A moment showed him the entire truth. A bullet, years before, had glanced over the forehead in such a manner as to press inward a thin strip of bone, directly upon the brain. This simple fact had caused that singular hallucination which she had so long evinced. The wound had become cicatrized, leaving the bone in this position. Another shot, precisely similar, had glanced in the same manner, reopening the wound and increasing her aberration. A simple operation of the physician removed this cause of her insanity.

"Just wash the wound, Mansfield," said the commander, "and we will then let her rest till morning."

Our hero proceeded to do as requested. A moment later he exclaimed, in a suppressed voice:

"Heavens! see here—SHE IS WHITE!"

Such was indeed the case, and the astonishment of all was unbounded. The water had washed off the pigment used among the Indians, and left the skin perfectly clear and transparent.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the commander; "what can it mean? As it is nearly all removed from her face it shows what a beautiful woman she is. Hello! what's the matter with Peterson?"

The ranger had turned as pale as death and fainted—a weakness of which he had never been guilty before. Mansfield instantly dashed some water in his face and he came to. He stared about him totally bewildered.

"Why, what's the matter, Jim?" laughed the commander. "Are you so tender-hearted that you must faint when a female is hurt?"

"Get me out of here, quick, if you value her life!" he said, staggering to his feet.

He was assisted to the door, where the physician asked: "What does this mean, Jim?"

"I'll tell you in the morning; don't say anything to me about it now. Just bring her to her senses as soon as you can."

Wondering and perplexed, the commander passed into the room again. As he entered, he naturally turned his eyes toward his patient, and it was now his turn to evince agitation.

"What's the matter with you, doctor?" asked Mansfield.

"Heaven save us! I know that girl!"

"Who is she?"

"Never mind now. I understand the meaning of Peterson's conduct. Leave me alone, Russel, and it shall all be made plain to you in the morning."

Our hero withdrew, and the commander was left alone with that being who has figured as the Frontier Angel in these pages. She sat bolt upright in the bed, staring at him with a look as fixed and intense as that of a wild animal.

"Lie down, Myra!" he spoke gently.

"Lie down!" she repeated, half to herself. "What does all this mean?—Why am I here?—Have I been wounded?—Why is my head bandaged?—Am I dreaming?"

The commander approached and laid her head back upon the pillow. In this position she pressed her hand to her forehead and commenced muttering to herself. The commander listened and now and then caught her words.

"Reason has returned, or is now striving to regain its place," he thought. "She is, in fact, in her right mind already, but it is no wonder that her recollections still confuse her. Strange! strange! Who would have thought that the Frontier Angel could have been her?"

Soon the patient slept—a troubled, dreamy sleep. She talked incessantly—now in soft, beseeching tones to Peterson and Holmes (the commander), then fairly shrieking the name of McGable, and once or twice she spoke the name of Marian Abbot!

The commander paced the floor awhile and then sat down and gazed into the face of the sufferer. Her eyes were closed and her face was of unearthly whiteness. Now and then the thin lips moved and the broken words came forth. Once the brow compressed as if a twinge of pain ran through her, and then she started and gasped:

"Oh, don't! don't! McGable, you will kill her! Let her alone!"

"What can she mean?" wondered Holmes. "Yes—it is Marian—there! she spoke her name then."

All at once, the patient came to the sitting position, and opening her eyes to their fullest extent, stared apparently through the very walls of the block-house out into the wilderness. Then, raising her hand, she repeated these words:

"I see them!—they are hastening to the cave!—they will kill her! she cannot get away! she will die!"

"You are excited—lie down again!" pleaded the commander. But she heeded him not. Her dark eyes glowed with tenfold light, and she added:

"I see them! they are Indians going to kill Marian Abbot! There are two Shawnee warriors, and they are now picking their way through the forest. She will die! she will die, if she is not saved at once."

The patient seemed as if speaking in a trance. She was in that state which baffles all human knowledge to understand, and, without attempting to explain what never can be understood, we give the facts alone. The commander, rapt, wondering, and believing, listened. When she had finished, she turned toward him.

"Franklin Holmes, I understand all, not all either; but I feel I have passed through some dreadful darkness, and light is again dawning upon me. There is a white captive in danger this moment. She must be rescued! I can lead the way!"

"But—but, Myra, you cannot. Hear how the storm rages," pleaded the commander.

"Have I not passed through more fearful storms than this?" she asked, stepping upon the floor and confronting him. "Yes," she added, in a low, meaning tone. "If you value the life of Marian Abbot, who is now living, it must be done. Get me one or two companions and I will lead the way."

Holmes believed that it was his duty to do so, and answering her that her wish should be gratified at once, he passed out. He aroused Dingle and Mansfield, but Peterson was nowhere to be found. He imparted to the ranger the identity of their guide, and the absence of Peterson was then understood. Preparations were made at once to start, and the impatience of Mansfield were painful to witness.

The Frontier Angel arrayed herself in her usual garments, wrapping a large shawl around her form, covering her head securely, and was ready when Holmes re-entered the room.

"How many are going?" she asked.

"Two well-tried and reliable men."

"That is plenty. Let us wait no longer."

She passed out without a word, and the two men joined her. The commander unbarred the gate and saw them move off in the darkness, adding no unnecessary caution or question.

"Keep close to me and move as fast as possible," she said, as soon as they were alone.

The rain was still falling, and the wind howled dismally overhead. The Frontier Angel led the way to the river, where they entered one of the canoes that were always there, and were propelled across by Dingle. As they reached the Ohio side the ranger saw a dark form suddenly appear beside him and glide along as silently as a shadow.

Mansfield recognized Peterson, and to set their fair guide at ease, he informed her that it was merely a friend who had joined them.

The speed with which the Frontier Angel moved through the woods was wonderful. She neither

seemed to run nor walk, but to glide as silently and swiftly as a specter over the ground. Her companions did not run, but they executed an amount of what might properly be termed "tall walking."

On—on she led them like the *ignis fatuus*, tearing their way through the tangled undergrowth, until after many a mile had been passed and hours had elapsed, she halted and said:

"Here is the spot."

At first our friends were unable to pierce the darkness; but after gazing steadily for a few moments, they discerned the faint outlines of a hill or swell in the ground in front. Still at a loss to understand how this could be their destination, Mansfield inquired:

"What is there here that can assist us in our search?"

"Sh! some one approaches!" admonished the guide.

The snapping of a twig was heard, and presently footsteps. Scarcely more than ten feet away they halted, and the guttural voice of a savage was heard. What he said was unintelligible to Mansfield, although Frontier Angel and Peterson understood every word. Despite the rain which was still falling, a huge torch instantly flashed out and displayed the gleaming visages of two Shawnees, stealing forward like the panther. At the very base of the hill or knoll alluded to, they halted. Here, by the aid of the flickering torches, our friends were enabled to gain a view of its peculiarities. It merely resembled a mass of solid green earth, with a number of stones piled at the base. A moment later, the dusky warriors entered the cave, and swinging their torch called out: "Pauquachoke! Pauquachoke!"

A shuffling, sliding over the ground was heard, and a bent, withered old squaw appeared.

"What seek the Shawnee chiefs?" asked the old squaw.

"The captive pale-face; bring her at once."

Thus commanded, the squaw clapped her hands three times, and our friends beheld Marian Abbot approach! She appeared the same as when Mansfield had last seen her, except she was paler and more dejected.

The Frontier Angel had entered the cave behind the savages, so that all save Peterson were now within it. He had purposely remained outside to conceal his identity. The savages standing with their backs toward the entrance failed to see the shadows behind them.

One of the savages placed his hand upon the knife in his belt and addressed Marian in broken English.

"Pale-face must die. McGable say kill white gal ef he no come back. He no come back—white gal must die."

"I am prepared for death and expect nothing else at your hands."

She answered composedly, but, suddenly, she darted backward with a piercing shriek. The torch was dashed to the ground as her savage executioner sprang toward her. She had caught sight of a pale, horror-struck face that shot in from the mouth of the cave, and heard the words:

"We are here, Marian! Don't be frightened. We'll clear the cave of these monsters in a second!"

Marian had sprung one side when the torch fell to the ground, and thus escaped the well-nigh fatal blow. All being blank darkness, her assassin was at fault, even had he repeated the attempt. But the Indians scenting danger, whisked out of the cave and were gone in a twinkling, escaping the murderous onslaught Peterson had prepared himself to give them as they emerged.

A few moments of necessary confusion followed the announcement of Mansfield's presence. Guided by the unerring instinct of love, he soon had Marian clasped in his arms. A fervent embrace and he led her forth. As they passed out of the entrance, the dark body of the old squaw brushed by them and skurried off in the darkness.

"Thank God, the dead is alive!" exclaimed Mansfield, impulsively, pressing a kiss upon the cold cheek of Marian. "Can you bear the walk, dearest? It is a long way to your home; let me wrap this blanket around you."

"I can bear anything now!" she replied, in a low tone. "Are the Indians gone?"

"None but friends are around you."

"I saw some one just now move by me."

"It is Pe—a friend."

"Let us go on, then. Is this dear Frontier Angel here?"

"It is to her your life is owing. She is no longer crazy."

"Oh, this must be a dream!" cried Marian, as she was locked in the arms of her devoted friend. "It cannot—cannot be real."

For a few moments nothing but the sobbing of the two was heard. Peterson seemed restless, and moved uneasily, but said nothing.

"Let us go," said the Frontier Angel, "for there is a long distance to travel."

The storm had partly ceased, though the wind was stronger than ever. Through the woods again—through swamps and thickets—over brooks and the matted undergrowth—brushing through the dripping bushes—until, as the misty light of morning was breaking over the scene, they once more appeared upon the banks of the Ohio, opposite the block-house.

It was a happy reunion—one whose perfect joy our feeble pen can never give. There were two persons who, it seemed, had risen from the dead. The Frontier Angel and Marian Abbot. When the identity and remarkable history of the former became known through the settlement, there were many, even of

the most intelligent, who believed it nothing less than a miracle.

If the reader, who has followed us through these pages, will examine the history of the West, he will find that in the summer of 1778, three flat-boats were attacked by the Shawnees, a short distance below the mouth of the Great Scioto, and nearly all of the inmates massacred. Two of the boats were sunk, and history states that every one on board was slain. On the remaining boat was a Methodist missionary by the name of Tucker, who fought as only those valiant old Methodist pioneers can fight. There were several women, who loaded their dead husbands' rifles and handed them to him, while he fired with such deadly effect, that his boat finally escaped, and he reached Maysville, where, a few days after, he died of his wounds.

In one of the boats which were sunk by the savages, was a man named William Orr, with his family. Every one of these, it is stated by historians, fell a victim to the fury of the Shawnees. And here we take the liberty of saying that, not for the first time, historical accounts are in error. The writer traveled over this section, where most of our scenes have been laid, some years since, and obtained from an aged man (who had known the rangers, Jim Peterson and Dick Dingle, years before) the following account of the affair.

The boat which contained Orr and his family was the hindmost, and upon the second volley of the Shawnees, every one was killed, except Myra Orr, the youngest daughter. Even she was wounded. A bullet grazed her forehead, pressing a piece of bone inward upon the brain, in such a manner as to render her crazy!

In a few moments the savages came up and proceeded to scalp their victims, when noticing that she was still alive, she was taken as a prisoner to the shore. It was subsequently ascertained that she was demented and no harm was offered her.* In time she was dressed and painted like the Indians, but she was never one of their number. She mingled with them, but her singular manner impressed them with the belief that she was something more than mortal. After a year or so, she took to the woods, and somewhere in its recesses she built herself a home. In the year 1790, she appeared in a settlement, and warned them of an intended attack, and from this time up to the closing scene of our story, she devoted her life to the one object of befriending the whites. In time she became known all along the frontier, and the unaccountable mystery which hung over her, gave rise to the superstitious belief that she was in reality an angel. Many attempts were made to discover her history, but none succeeded, until her reason was restored and she gave it herself.

But what is perhaps nearly as singular, is that Myra Orr, the "Frontier Angel," and Jim Peterson, the ranger, were lovers in their younger days. They had separated much in the same manner that Mansfield and Marian had. When the tragic fate of his love reached the ears of Peterson, he turned ranger and acted with the celebrated Dingle in that capacity. He rarely referred to the great bereavement, but there were several who knew it. Among these, was Franklin Holmes, commander of the block-house, who was acquainted with the Orr family, before they removed from the East.

It will be remembered that Peterson left Marian Abbot, as he believed, in a dying condition, when the flat-boat was attacked. She was desperately wounded, and without the utmost care would have died. McGable recognized her as he boarded the flat-boat, and carried her to the shore, where he gave her in charge of an Indian runner, with instructions to carry her at once to Pauquachoke, one of their old "medicine-women." McGable instantly returned and joined in the massacre. A few days after he visited the medicine-woman, and learned that Marian would recover, although it would necessarily require a long time. In fact, she had not been able to walk until a month previous to her rescue. Escape was impossible, as Pauquachoke had been instructed never to permit her to pass out of the cave. By an accident, the Frontier Angel became aware of the state of things and visited the captive on several occasions. This reached the ears of McGable, and fearful of losing his prey through her means, he determined to kill her. His attempts and failures to do this have been referred to. The fearful exertion through which Myra Orr went, on the night of Marian's rescue, well-nigh proved fatal to her. Reason flickered and fled for a time, but finally returned in its full strength.

We wish our readers could have been down at the settlement, on the night of October 20th, 1793. It would have required immense room to have accommodated them, we suppose, but the woods were large enough. There was a double wedding there that night!

Jim Peterson gave up the ranger's life and settled down as a farmer. He had several children, and two of his grandsons are now prominent merchants in the city of Cincinnati. In the war of '812, Russel Mansfield acted as Colonel, and at its close retired to his farm near Maysville, covered with honor and glory. Here he lived with his children and grandchildren, and it is only a few years since that he followed his wife to her last resting-place. Dick Dingle and Peter Jenkins became bosom friends, and spent many years of adventure and peril together. We will dismiss them, with the promise that their experience shall not be withheld from the reader, and that they both shall be heard of again.

* A crazy or idiotic person is always regarded with superstitious reverence by the North American Indian.

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